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ELOCUTION

ITS FIRST PRINCIPLES

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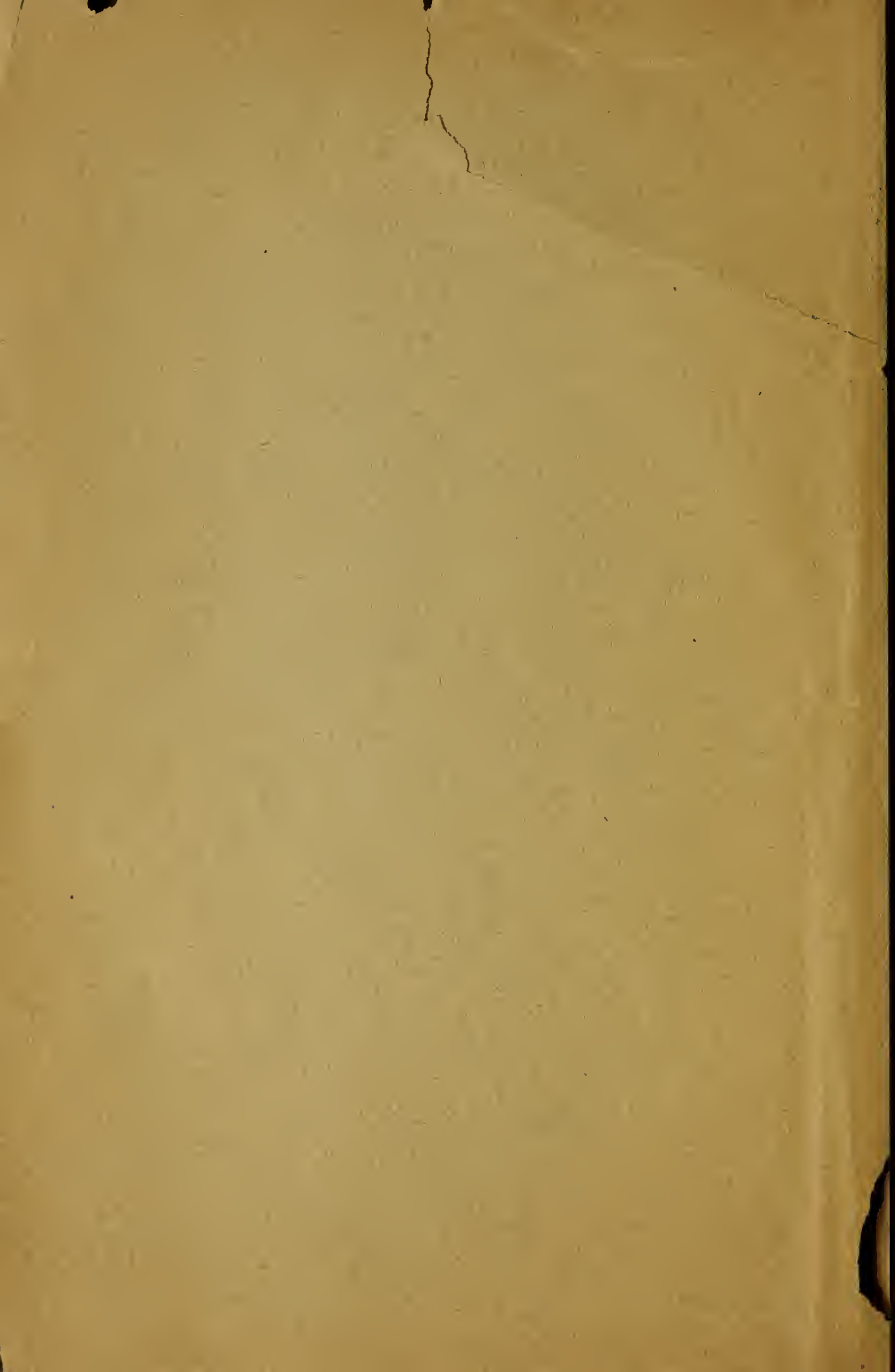
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EDITOR "HARROGATE HERALD"

AUTHOR OF "VOCALISM: ITS STRUCTURE AND CULTURE FROM AN ENGLISH
STANDPOINT," "VOCAL FAULTS AND THEIR REMEDIES," ETC.

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
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THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES

THE FIRST

OF GREAT BRITAIN

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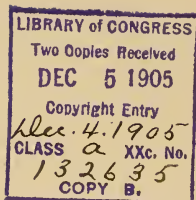
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ELOCUTION

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

BREATH

THE allied arts of speech and song have a common foundation in right breathing. This involves effortless taking of breath, holding it with composure, releasing it freely, but economically. Upon the breath depends security of tone. The lungs contain the store of wind which is governed by the muscles of the chest. Here we seek to locate our control. The chest is the fundamental seat of leverage—not the throat. There is a saying in Italy that “an Italian has no throat.” By this is meant that he does not set or compress or interfere with that portion of his anatomy in seeking to govern his voice. The muscles of the throat will act automatically without thought or interference on the part of the

speaker or singer, if they are permitted to do so. Many muscles, besides those of the chest, contribute to vocal control; but as to the action of those of the throat, the speaker should remain unconscious, otherwise he will betray his throat in the quality of his tone. Let the student, then, concentrate attention upon the chest and forget his throat. He should feel that the current of breath is pressed from the lungs through the open tube of his throat upon that part of his sound cavity (the mouth) at which the vowel renders it necessary he should locate, as it were, the sustained portion of the voice. The speaker should feel that the impact of sound is directed to the part of the resonant cavity which gives the particular characteristics essential to perfect pronunciation. In other words, he should locate, as it were, the column of vibrating breath we know as sound. The lips, with advantage, may be considered to govern in a minor degree the power and efficacy of the breath, and, to a more complete extent, in conjunction with the tongue, the emotional character of tone and efficiency of both pronunciation and enunciation. Let the mind, therefore, concentrate upon the chest, mouth, and lips in seeking the purest vocal results;

there will then be little fear of "throaty" tones and cramped delivery. Under the head of "Attack" I deal with a matter controlled by unconscious action of one of the organs of the throat; but as this takes place automatically, I merely mention what is required to achieve the operation without going into details, which would result in confusing distractions. All that the pupil need be told is the simplest method of producing an effect; he need not be plunged into the whirlpool of physiological speculation. A man may eat his dinner any time without feeling compelled to understand the operations of his digestive organs.

In speaking, every portion of the body should be FREE AND UNRESTRAINED. The lower part of the chest ought particularly to be under easy, but firm, control. The throat, jaws, lips, and tongue must be so restful as to become free of all feeling of tension, and be able to respond promptly, flexibly, and sympathetically to the will. Any hard compression or straining of these organs will weaken the natural functions of the lungs and chest by transferring the fulcrum of control to the wrong point. Whatever we may then attempt will prove unnatural, increasing and

rendering futile all our efforts. Natural expression cannot come out of unnatural repression. That which is unnatural is forced, and cannot by any expedient be made to sound or appear spontaneous. Mechanical semblance may pass muster for real feeling, but it is not felt even by the apparently deluded audience. The artifice becomes too transparent. Hence, if we would appear natural, we must feel natural; and no one can do this if he is fighting in any way against the physical spontaneity which is the source of involuntary action. Emotional feeling is natural and spontaneous. When fettered by too much mechanical preparation and elaboration, it does not ring truly, because the impulse which prompts the emotion is checked by self-consciousness, induced by these unsympathetic, extraneous influences. Both in singing and speaking, however, technical expedients must be employed to give effect to natural impulses. This machinery, however, should not be too elaborate, but its operation so practised as to become a matter of instinct. Pianoforte playing ceases to be a mechanical effort when the hands obey the dictates of the mind, without thought of the technical processes involved. A pianist ac-

quires a singing touch by digital practice, unconcerned with the anatomy of his hand. Thus it should be with the vocalist. To the student I would say, "Take a deep breath—through the partially-open mouth, for a quick breath; through the nostrils, when time and circumstances permit—hold it! Now let it go out slowly, steadily, with an even pressure upon the vowel sound of the first word or syllable. Keep a commanding grip upon your chest, so as to control the flow of air from your lungs, and sustain the vowel sound at precisely the same power. Now see how long and how evenly you can hold the vowel sound. The longer you retain that, particularly as the lungs approach depletion, the harder and swifter you will have to make the breath-pressure. Even though the effort be stronger, see that you preserve the same quality of tone."

Now, in taking this first step, the pupil may not have inhaled quite so comfortably and satisfactorily as could be wished. Never mind! Do not dismay him with too many instructions. THE ART OF TEACHING IS MAKING THE PUPIL DO THE RIGHT THING UNCONSCIOUSLY. It is not necessary in this case that he should understand all the details of the processes so long as he can accomplish the

precise result, without premeditation, EVERY TIME. If he cannot do this, let him repeat until he can. Later he will have innumerable other points essential for him to watch. If he should take a short breath by means of a gasp, tell him to take a long, deep breath and not to be in haste. He will soon feel that his lungs seem to fill at the base, and will have no desire to wear corsets.

But now let me endeavour to explain to the ordinary individual, who likes to speak but cannot do so convincingly, why his words often have so little effect. As a rule, it is because he does not understand how to manage his breathing. He may be able to pronounce and enunciate correctly, but he appears not to do so, for the reason that his breath control is insufficiently skilful to enable him to make certain words, particularly when of more than one syllable, convey their most impressive significance. People in the audience may distinguish, but are not moved by them, simply because, as delivered, they do not convey the emotional feeling intended.

I will pause, for a moment, to point out the difference between ordinary conversation and public speaking. In the first case, it would sound pedantic were a person to speak in

private as carefully, properly, and with the same incisiveness as he should on a public platform. He does not attempt it, therefore conversationalists have acquired the habit of mumbling rapidly their words, which often may only be understood by their inflections—that is, by the rising or falling of certain syllables. To say “no” with a rising inflection would convey a query. The voice falling on “no” would be tantamount to the assent of conviction. Wrong inflections convey wrong meanings. But inflections in conversation and on the platform are not quite the same. They must be accentuated in public speaking—more sustained and delayed, so as to become stronger, slower, and more effective. Inflections I deal with elsewhere, but I must here point out that they are executed by influence of breath-pressure.

It is absolutely essential that the vowel sounds of accented syllables, particularly, should be attacked with firmness, whatever power may be required for the note; and its sound must be held, or sustained, longer than the vowels of unaccented syllables. Herein again arises the importance of breath-pressure. To facilitate the holding of the accented vowel sound, the experienced elocutionist

resorts to inflection. Variety of tone is demanded in public speaking, not only to give expression to the words, but to afford that change which obviates monotonous delivery. On many occasions, the practised speaker finds great assistance from inflections, for the reason that they cause the words to flow in graceful, even musical, succession. It must be remembered that apparently single vowels have more than one sound. For example: The final of "o" is the "oo" sound, as in mood. This vowel cannot be perfectly finished without the "oo" final. Whereas in singing the "oo" must become but a brief impression, in elocution the final sounds of the various vowels may often be held longer. They assist sustaining effect and are needful, because it is much more difficult to sustain the speaking than the singing voice. But much depends upon the mood of the phrase in which the vowel is employed. Often it will be necessary for the final sound to be very brief; at other times it may be slightly prolonged with excellent effect. For example: Suppose a speaker to be giving an assertion of some belief in the words "I know." If he desired to sound the true ring of conviction, he would deliver the vowel sound of "o" in "know"

with a sustained pressure of breath—almost at full power. As soon as the first sound of the vowel was produced, his voice would move in a quick, downward direction to an interval considerably lower than that on which he began the word. In this case, the pressure of the breath would really demand strong wind power as the falling pitch commenced, gradually lessening towards the end. If the speaker were desirous of delivering the same word in a more conciliatory, or insinuating mood, the pressure of the breath would be less, and diminish in proportion to the falling of the inflection. Even when light modulations of this kind are employed, considerable firmness of breath is necessary in order that the voice may gain the impetus necessary to enable it to move buoyantly. In upward inflections, as the highest point is approached the breath must gradually subside, until the tone evaporates in such a way as to leave no definite remembrance of final pitch. In this way, the elocutionist escapes both monotony and the suggestion of a distinct note of the musical scale.

To acquire a smooth, flowing delivery it is highly important that every element of a vowel sound or consonant impression should be fully realised. In speaking, the consonants

are much more effective bearers of tone than in singing. A continuous and even current of breath is essential to flowing delivery. The consonants act as the connecting links between vowels, and, if properly observed, adequate breath will automatically respond and the words flow in graceful cadences appropriate for the speaking voice.

Who has not observed the speaker who talks himself out of breath—the cyclonic orator? This is a case of discordant sound and purposeless breath. Such have no idea of wind economy, vocal modulation, or the graceful laws of contrast. He commences on a high key which admits of no delicate inflections, and continues to discharge his lungs in blasts on one piercing level. Audible breath frays his tone, he puffs, perspires, finally subsides into that confusion which has long possessed his audience. He has simply wasted his breath in more senses than one.

The cure for such a speaker is to select a lower pitch, direct just so much wind upon his vowels as will produce compact, rounded notes, and feed his consonants with a steady but even flow of wind. Variety of pitch he should affect, and connect his links of scattered sound into one continuous chain of

carefully enunciated, flowing words. Breath extravagance is this speaker's primary fault.

The influence which breath exerts upon the carrying power of a voice should not be overlooked. Whether the tones be soft or loud, they should have even pressure of wind constantly behind them. A fluctuating tone is seldom a carrying one. Whatever the power employed, absolutely uniform breath pressure will always give not only the most carrying power, but the best quality of tone. Soft notes are often ineffective because they are not of uniform force. The most delicate note derives that purity and vitality which travels through absolutely uniform pressure of the breath. Such delivery derives the inestimable quality of composure.

The vocal power of a speaker, as I have said, is determined by the flow of his breath. The quality of tone is also largely influenced by the way he employs it. A man may possess abundance of wind, but if he does not know how to make the best use of it, he is no better off than the spendthrift, who sinks into poverty through squandering gold. The prime secrets of successful breath management are steady flow and conservation. The speaker, like the singer, must learn to use just

so much wind as he requires and no more, otherwise his tone will not have the resonance, quality, and carrying power which combine to produce effective delivery.

Standing or walking, a person relies upon his balance for the stability of his foothold; in speaking or singing, on the steady pressure of the breath for vocal security. Wind pressure concentrated firmly upon the note affords the same leverage necessary to control which balance imparts to the equilibrium of the body. The steadying force, broadly speaking, comes through the grip on the chest (and the use of other muscles I need not specify), which mainly regulates an even flow of tone. The mouth should retain a constant, immovable opening on a sustained vowel sound, otherwise it is difficult to preserve the precise wind-flow necessary to just fill the mouth-opening without waste of breath, which, when it escapes unvocalised, imparts a reedy or breathy tone to the voice. Every unnecessary or faulty movement of mouth-position on vowel sounds not only impairs vocal control, but imparts an element or elements of sound disturbing to the tone-quality. It affects breath control in this way: the larger the mouth-opening, the more wind is required to fill the

breach. The aperture may be made so large as to render it impossible so to fill it with breath as to round or consolidate the tone. Changing the facial opening renders the wind-flow irregular; and irregularity of breath current jeopardises both vocal quality and control. When the flow of wind is suddenly checked, it takes a moment to gather again that regular motion which efficiently supports the note and purifies the quality. There occurs, in consequence, a disturbing sensation of uncertainty fatal to that continuity of breath suggestive of perfect vocal fluency. Even where crisp syllables are uttered, the breath-flow should not be interfered with. Accents may be given tantamount to the staccato by a sudden push of wind which does not stop the breath current. This expedient constitutes an elastic expansion or accent, but not a break, in the flowing tone. A running river expands at the wider points of the bed, but the flow goes on the same swift course. Let the breath operate likewise in accented passages where flowing speech is essential to the spirit of the text.

To convey an idea of the importance of even breath-pressure, I will take the following illustration:

Suppose two men are balancing a heavy ladder on end. Should the pressure of one man's hand falter, or become lighter than the other's, the equilibrium of the ladder will be disturbed. In the same manner, unevenness of breath-pressure upon a vowel sound will disturb the balance and security of the voice. It is helpful to the elocutionist to imbue himself with the idea that his tones must be balanced by the breath.

TAKING BREATH

IT is little use discussing physiological problems and attempting to lay down scientific rules for breathing. There is no difficulty in taking a breath if one does so naturally. Neither a singer nor a speaker can do it, however, if he is placed in trepidation by the fear of transgressing the laws which he remembers the "breath specialist" is so fond of propounding. The crying infant knows no laws. He employs the resources with which he is endowed by nature, instinctively; inhaling, exhaling, and holding his breath at will. The full-grown person, however, possessing acute reasoning powers, is apt to convert involuntary action into an intricate scientific problem. When he does so, instinct deserts him, and he seeks his object by all sorts of impossible expedients, in the confusion and futility of which he becomes hopelessly fogged and demoralised. In anticipating difficulties which need not exist, he creates the very obstacles he desires to avoid. How many patients can take a natural breath when desired to do so

by their medical adviser? In nine cases out of ten, they make but a sorry attempt. The more anxious one becomes, the more confused he is. Whilst in many things nature is only the perfection of art, in breathing art is but the perfection of nature. Therefore, I advise the student at the onset to place himself in a comfortable, even indifferent frame of mind. Let him eschew effort, and cultivate, what is in this application only, the supreme virtue of laziness, otherwise he will create an anxiety disturbing to natural conditions. The teacher who will insist upon complicated theories of breathing is only creating difficulties both for the pupil and himself.

When a person is about to speak under natural conditions he opens his mouth unconsciously, takes in air and gives utterance. The two things seem to occur simultaneously, and all the organs of speech are ready for the operation of sound. The processes are not so spontaneous when the breath is taken through the nose. We cannot improve upon nature! Then why should we complicate what should be an instinctive action? By all means, inhale through the nose whenever possible, but in singing and declamation it is generally impracticable.

When the breath is inhaled through the mouth, the tongue will automatically lie flat. This increases the resonant space by preventing the tongue from blocking the tone.

When the breath is taken through the nose, the tongue, in one part or another, presses up towards the roof of the mouth.

Just touch the lower teeth with the tip of the tongue, then take a full breath through the open mouth, and by the mirror it will be noticed that the tongue immediately lies flat, but hollowed in the centre.

Abnormally big, or curling tongues, may be subjected to control by this method of training.

Say "thou" and the tongue will take its proper position.

No one will go far wrong in breathing if he remember that it is a matter in which the chest alone is concerned. The muscles of the mouth and throat have neither part nor lot in the operation, and must be left severely alone. It is only when these cease to interpose their very hurtful, spasmodic efforts that the true power can be exercised. Leave the throat alone, and the chest will work. The control must be exercised somewhere, and if we do not employ vicious throat control, the proper

method will come naturally. The chest is the motive agent, and will do the work easily enough. Aching throat muscles are nature's punishment upon the weak for their interference with that which is in no sense their business.

PITCH

IT is almost as difficult for a man to become an orator who is tone-deaf as for the colour-blind individual to paint pictures. An ear for pitch is equally essential to the speaker and the singer. There exist, however, certain differences which render the task of the former, in some respects, far greater than that of the latter. The singer has but to observe intervals accurately defined for him by the laws of music. The speaker, on the other hand, must vary the pitch of his tone without the guidance of any definite scale of intervals. If a speaker were to attempt to confine a number of words to a recognised musical pitch, he would produce a monotonous delivery known as "sing-song." Indeed, the repeated or regular employment of the same intervals, or succession of declamatory pitches, is open to the precise objection, therefore to be avoided by elocutionists, unless such methods are occasionally demanded for special, descriptive purposes.

Whilst the orator should not sound a per-

fect note of the musical scale in speech, he may touch some pitch which approximates to the interval. It is the necessity of avoiding musical notes which creates constant difficulties for the speaker. He must have variety of pitch, yet cannot obtain it ready-made as the singer may from a fixed scale of tones and semi-tones. Thus for his variety he is compelled to rely upon those modulations of voice known as "inflections." These I must treat in a later chapter, as I now desire to adhere to the subject of "Pitch."

A singer could not attempt any musical phrase without first impressing upon his mind the key in which the music was written. This, in elocution, I term "the pitch."

The key of a recitation or speech is determined by many considerations: first of all, by the natural range and type of the speaker's voice; secondly, the size of the room or hall; thirdly the character of the subject-matter. These are the main considerations. The key should be sufficiently low to permit of the voice reaching the highest pitch demanded by inflection, without effort, and sufficiently high to admit of the voice being able to descend with comfortable resonance. A speaker, therefore, should have some idea of the ap-

proximate intervals at which he wishes to deliver respective phrases. Having ascertained this, he must also be decided as to whether his most significant words will require mainly upward or downward inflections. If he has misjudged his key, he may often, with effect, transpose to another; but I must remind him that such transposition should not take place in the middle of a sentence, or anywhere, save in that place which is tantamount to the starting point of another verse or idea. Minor modulations may often take place at the beginning of sentences. Very startling changes, however, should not be attempted without good and special reasons justifying the course.

If the student have an ear for music, he may with advantage seek a note on the piano fairly answering the pitch he requires. In deciding upon this interval, he should seek to disguise the piano note by taking a sound either a little higher or lower for his first syllable.

We will suppose that the lines are:

“A little girl stood on the shore,—
Gazing out to sea.”

The accented word in this case would determine the key or guide to the pitch, and should

be delivered about midway between the highest and the lowest note (leaving inflection out of the case) the speaker is likely to touch.

In dealing with the first line, "A little child stood on the shore," a particular succession of pitches will be required quite different to those demanded if the words represented a statement complete in itself. But herein it is governed by the more important explanation (contained in the second line) as to what the child did there, viz., "looking out to sea." "A little child," therefore, should be uttered somewhat in accordance with the course of the lines and curves marked below the supposed words. In reciting the first line the voice must have regard to the approximate intervals as follows:

A *lit - tle chi - ld stood o - n the shore.**

A



The altitude of the line defines the relative pitch. The thickness indicates the pressure of the breath and power of voice demanded.

This brief example will serve to show the plan upon which the voice moves by inflection. The phrase employed may, of course, be vari-

¹ For explanation of this small loop or circle see page 10.

ously treated, even with better effect. My object is to demonstrate the variety of pitches which must enter into modulations, and how they are connected in flowing sequence.

It is necessary to divide the range of the chest or speaking voice into three pitches. I employ the term "chest," in order to exclude the light, falsetto tone of the higher inflections from the calculation. We will divide the chest range into three sections: the low pitch, the high, and the medium. Many other intervals are employed, but three are sufficient for our purpose. On these three pitches we base our modulations. Each becomes the key-note, for the time being, from which the intervals are calculated. In ordinary conversation, we choose our pitch instinctively, for by practice in a small room we have learned to feel, without thought, which elevation is most suitable. When a person comes to address an audience in a large hall, however, he finds himself at sea, because, through lack of experience, he knows not the pitch and vocal power required to make his words tell. Artificial conditions are created, and he has not the art to satisfy them. The process is very simple, after all. Let him either raise

the pitch or increase the force of his lower voice so that it will reach the farthest listener in the hall and sound to that person like ordinary conversation. He must speak slower and employ stronger and more continuous breath current than he would use in a small room. To do this, his chest control must be more rigid, vowels sustained, and inflections made to sing longer and louder. Even under these extra demands, he should retain his natural form, simply accentuating the force and flow of his technique. If he read carefully the following chapters, he will understand the agencies I term "technique," and realise how to combine the various parts of the vocal machinery. Not that he should complicate his mind with too many details, so long as the machine, as a whole, runs smoothly; but I would enable him to detect any weakness that may arise in any part thereof. I shall avoid multiplying rules and mention but those principles which are necessary to afford him an intelligent idea of cause and effect. Above all things, LET THE STUDENT BE NATURAL; but expand his natural forces to suit the size of his room and audience.

We often hear a speaker enjoined by his hearers to "speak up!" Exactly! That is

why he should understand “pitch”—at least recognise that the larger the room the slightly higher should be the pitch, or stronger the pressure of wind. At the same time, never allow the voice to mount too high. Lower tones, well supported by firmly and evenly sustained breath, are always most effective and convincing. They carry farther than is generally imagined. The safest plan when seeking a higher pitch is to elevate the voice gradually—FEEL YOUR WAY.

PRONUNCIATION

A SPEAKER should endeavour to understand every element which contributes towards perfect pronunciation and enunciation, otherwise he will be unable to achieve the true proportions of finished articulation. Let it be understood that when I speak of pronunciation I refer to vowel sounds. Enunciation is intended to treat of consonants. Combination of the two represents articulation. We often use the term pronunciation, however, in a sense which includes the three. These sub-divisions are necessary for analytical purposes so that we may determine the accurate balance of the respective elements of speech. The first effort towards this accomplishment should be directed towards production of the true vowel sound which forms the tone-basis of a syllable. Upon this achievement, resonance, vocal quality, and musical flow depend. Each vowel sound has its own particular mouth and lip position or opening. As all mouths differ in shape, slight modifications are sometimes necessary in order to

meet certain tone characteristics peculiar to the individual. But the true position of each vowel must be approximately defined.

One of the most difficult problems of our time is to ascertain what may be accepted as perfect English pronunciation. Existing uncertainty arises mainly in respect to vowel sounds. Each locality is subject, more or less, to what we term the provincialisms of speech. One will give a broad, another a lighter sound to the vowel supposed to be employed. A standard pronouncing dictionary tells us which variant of a vowel should be used, but provincial influences may convert a long "a" into a short "o." For example: In Yorkshire, one has heard "man" pronounced "mon," and the short sound of "a" (as in "hat") delivered as "ah." A person cannot perfectly distinguish the sound of his own voice; therefore, even after consulting a dictionary, he will unconsciously emit the wrong sound of a vowel. He should be guided by the opinion of one who, having travelled in various English speaking countries, is able to distinguish the peculiarities of pronunciation common to each. The safest course is to endeavour to realise the medium between extremely broad and unduly light

vowel pronunciation. By this means, he will avoid that which may appear so unusual as to sound eccentric or pedantic. It is possible to speak correctly without that extravagance which would jar upon the ear of those who have been accustomed to correct but modified forms of speech. Pronunciation and enunciation (the first applies to vowels, the second to consonants) should never appear artificial. It will not do so if all the elements of a vowel sound are fluently evolved in their proper proportions and extremes are avoided. It is a very desirable plan to note the diction of an accomplished public speaker. The pronunciation of such, if he be a travelled man, may generally be accepted as representing the happy medium. It is necessary, however, for all students of elocution to understand the "mechanism" of perfect articulation. Unless they do so, they will not be competent to detect any flaw which may render parts of the local machinery ineffective. As a consequence, they may stumble blindly on, wasting their time and strength upon mere guess-work. Not knowing the processes by which vocal effects are naturally obtained, they resort to all manner of artificial expedients, which but render confusion worse confounded.

To consider the technique of speech in anything approaching a helpful manner, I must, to some extent, traverse the path of common knowledge, for we must enter upon analysis. We convey our thoughts by means of written and spoken words. The latter derive sound from vowels, diphthongs, and consonants, principally from the first named, having well-defined variants, with which we must become familiar. The accepted vowels are: a, e, i, o, u, and the school books tell us "sometimes w and y." The rest of the alphabet consists of consonants.

A diphthong is a combination of two vowels, giving, apparently, a single sound. For example: "oi," as in "boy"; consisting of "aw" as in "awe," and "e" as in "eat."

As a matter of fact, there is hardly a vowel sound which can be considered complete in itself. It is most important that speakers and singers should realise this, or they will never completely master the mechanics of articulation. The final of "o," as in "owe," is "oo," as in "moon." This vowel cannot be rounded and completed without such final. The closing sound of "o," as in other cases, however, must be very brief—just sufficient to round and cut off the vowel.

The final of "a," as in "hay," is the long "e" in "eat."

Long "e" has for its final just a faint trace of short "i," as in "it." This, however, need not concern the speaker. Constant waste occurs in all forces. Allowances must, therefore, be made for this deterioration, in elocution, as in all things. In pronouncing a vowel, if we aim at the real sound, owing to this waste, we barely hit the mark. We must allow for this leeway just as the expert rifle marksman in considering his elevation calculates upon the law of gravity and the force of a side wind. If a speaker or singer attempt the real sound of a short "i," he will, in all probability, arrive at a short "e," as in "met." He should, therefore, attack this variant of the vowel with just the suspicion of the long "e." The method will not be distinguishable by a too acute sound, for the reason that the voice in the first attack does not tend to throw up the true vowel sound, that comes in the later and more sustained portion of the tone. For the same reason, aim at "la" when giving forth the short sound of "u" (as in "love.") A speaker's pronunciation is judged by the effects which reach an audience, not by the expedients he employs to arrive at

perfect results. The methods I have suggested, therefore, cannot be deemed distortions of English. They are indispensable both to tone-quality and pure diction. What purports to be long "i" cannot be completed without its final: acute "e."

There really should be no such vowel as long "i," so far as the elocutionist (or singer) is concerned. That sound known as "i" commences with sustained "ah" and ends with a brief, acute "e." The mere closing of the mouth will sufficiently realise this final element.

Singers, generally, have difficulty with the vowel "i" because they do not realise the above fact. Speakers, for the same reason, do not obtain the best results. As "i" does not exist as a separate sound, there is no single available mouth-position for it. The novice feels round for it with his lips, but does not succeed. The person who recognises the constituent parts of "i" will go for the "ah" position at once, hold it, then cut it off with acute "e" by means of closing lips. He thus realises the true "i." It should be remembered that the "ah" position of the mouth is one of the most open and favourable for pure, resonant quality. Those who seek a single

mouth-position for "i" and do not observe the elements of the vowel, will invariably employ a nearly closed or moving mouth, and, of course, with unsatisfactory results.

Before proceeding further in this direction, I must give the vowels and their variants, which are as follow:

"A" has four distinct sounds:

"a," as in "hay";
"a," " " "father";
"a," " " "awe";
"a," " " "hat."

"E" has two:

"e," as in "eat";
"e," " " "bet."

"I," two:

"i," as in "lie";
"i," " " "bit."

"O," two:

"o," as in "owe";
"o," " " "not."

"U," has two:

"u," as in "mute";
"u," " " "but."

The above vowels and their variants are sufficient to form comprehensive bases for most words or syllables. The student must learn to distinguish the vowel element which

forms the basis of the word employed. For example, take the word "her." One might be inclined to imagine the vowel sound in this case to be a variant of the vowel "e." It is not so. It partakes more of the short "u," as in "but." The sound of the "r" by way of a final adds an important distinguishing element to the word. At the first blush, the student might feel that the short "u" was a distortion. But let us consider: ALL FORCES WEAKEN IN DISTANCE. A vowel sound does not reach the audience precisely as it leaves the speaker's mouth, for the reason that the longer it is held and the farther it travels, the weaker it becomes in pronunciation. The sound of any short vowel is more and more attenuated the longer it is held. The attack of the pronunciation, therefore, may be perfectly accurate; but the longer the vowel sound continues, the thinner and more decimated it becomes. In public speaking and singing, therefore, we must aim at a more exaggerated pronunciation to make up for this waste or deterioration. Investigations will show that the foundation of some of the lighter vowels contains an element of "ah." We must strengthen, broaden, or render more acute the vowel colours in order that they

may not fade through travelling considerable distances.

Let the student carefully weigh the considerations I have now advanced, and by the experiment of adopting the same principle with other vowels and their variants, prove for himself how this deterioration of colour affects an audience.

Take the word "bull." This is not a phonetic variant of the "u," and cannot be placed under the category of "u's." It is derived from a variant of "oo." Double "o" is the basis, and should be aimed at in attacking the vowel. The mouth must extend to allow the tongue to realise the consonant "l." The first attack of the word gives the small round double "o" mouth-position, but as the mouth is extended for the final "l," the double "o" sound becomes so tempered by the change of facial position as to realise the true pronunciation of "bull." Let it be a rule with public speakers and singers to aim for a stronger, broader, or more exaggerated sound of the vowel in order to provide for the fading of vocal colour to which I have alluded. In working upon this principle, great care must be taken that the various elements of a single vowel should evolve in those true

proportions which realise perfect pronunciation AS IT REACHES THE AUDIENCE. A student cannot distinguish perfectly the results of his own vocal work, therefore he must be guided by his teacher or some one with an equally sensitive ear and discriminating mind. But to continue.

“Oo” is sounded as in “moon.”

“Oo” occurs in “bull,” but more briefly than in “moon.”

A combination of “a,” as in “far,” and “oo,” as in “moon,” will produce the essential sound of “o,” as in “how.”

Serious misconception exists regarding the long “u,” as in “mute.” Many people give it the sound of “oo,” as in “moon.” The true pronunciation begins with acute “e,” as in “me”; then comes the “u,” which has for its brief final, “oo.” This mechanism evolves in the perfect articulation so as to necessitate three mouth-positions, as follow: the extended smiling lips and nearly closed teeth on “e”; rather widely rounded lips and more open teeth on “u”; the lips describing a smaller and rounder opening on the final “oo” attained by the closing mouth. These positions should follow on smoothly, so that the tone elements may evolve without revealing the

process. In singing, these three divisions become more urgent. The speaker, however, who has not to sustain tones as long as a singer, may confine himself to acute "e" and the "oo."

To utter the word "you," let the student pronounce the acute "e" and then "oo." Dismiss all thought of "y," simply say "e-u."

The element or sensation afforded by the "u" is automatically provided by the lips gathering themselves together for the small round position of "oo." The tongue comes forward in the mouth, under some restraint of contraction, as if it sought to aid the compression of the lips.

As the vowel of the word or syllable is the voice builder, the speaker should not only distinguish its true sound, but sustain it by breath-pressure throughout most of the syllable. He should know the requisite mouth-position for such vowel, and not depart from it until the consonants render it imperative.

In order to cultivate sustaining power, deliver the various vowel sounds on one evenly sustained pitch, preserving the tone so long as the breath shall last.

Repeat this vowel exercise in combined crescendo and diminuendo form.

Pliant lips are necessary to connect the facial movements of fluent speech. Any hesitancy as to vowel position or consonant operation results in scattered tone, of bad quality, ill control of voice, and general inefficiency. Vocal movement then becomes so spasmodic, or uncertain, as to be disturbing. The reason of all this is very simple: When the mouth position is fixed and immovable, the breath spontaneously fills the aperture formed by the lips, and creates round, consolidated tone of the best quality. If, by the uncertainty of the speaker, the lips are describing various shapes, the regular flow of wind is so checked and disturbed as to destroy all feeling of vocal control; pronunciation and enunciation become imperfect, and tone suffers. The student, therefore, should understand, first, the relative mouth-positions of the respective vowels.

“A,” as in “father,” demands the fullest oval, rather than round opening—a full yawn.

“A,” as in “awe,” similar aperture slightly condensed, particularly at the mouth corners. Slight changes of lip position only, are necessary. Pupils usually go to extremes in these matters.

“A,” as in “hat,” like “ah,” only with

mouth slightly more closed—about a half yawn. In practising, assume the respective open positions by means of the “yawn.” The muscles of the face will thus avoid that tension which causes throaty or constrained tones.

“A,” as in “hay,” an extended mouth, with the opening between the teeth sufficient to admit the forefinger its broadest way. This will give (the mouth corners are not too stretched) what I term the “square opening,” though in reality the lips describe a moderately long, gaping slit.

“E,” as in “eat,” has a still more extended, but shallow opening; the teeth admitting the narrowest part of the forefinger. The correct aperture will avoid extreme, reedy quality.

These acute sounds should be delivered softly, with a light flow of breath.

“E,” as in “bet,” requires the teeth to take rather fuller opening.

“I,” as in “lie,” demands first the “ah” position, held throughout the syllable, and is followed by the acute “e,” as in “eat.” This position, however, is but briefly maintained.

“I,” as in “bit,” describes about the third of a yawn.

“O,” as in “owe,” requires a full round “O”-shaped opening.

“O,” as in “not,” similar to that of “a,” as in “awe.”

“Oo,” as in “moon,” necessitates a longer opening than that of “o”; slightly more extended horizontally—equivalent to a small, round opening which has been flattened. This position does not admit of extreme power.

“U,” as in “minute,” begins with the acute “e” position, is followed by a rather full “oo” position, which becomes smaller and more rounded for its final impression.

“Oi,” as in “boy,” demands an oval position; that is, with the “o” shape slightly condensed at the mouth corners or sides; “e” position follows as a brief final.

“Ow,” as in “how,” commences with the “ah” position, ends with the double “o” shape. The latter is very brief.

“Open vowels” are those which afford the most open mouth-positions. These naturally contribute more resonance than closed vowels (such as long “e” and “a”); therefore, where uniform power is required on both open and closed tones, the breath pressure should be modified on open syllables, and slightly increased, where consistent with good tone, on the closed vowels. The student may utter a

closed vowel, and with the same breath-force deliver an open one; he will then realise the disparity in volume and quality which occurs. This experiment will serve to remind him of the necessity of equalising tones where uniform power and quality are demanded.

“Thou.”—In attempting this word, do not aim to produce the complete sound of “ow” at the first attack. Remember, that “ow,” as in “thou,” is composed of “ah,” as in “father,” and “oo,” as in “moon.” The “ah” is held throughout the sustained word and the “oo” briefly sounded by way of final.

“Love.”—In attacking the vowel sound of this word, let the mouth assume the “ah” position. Say “ah” so long as the vowel is sustained, using a soft loose breath. As the mouth closes to realise the “v” it adds sufficient of the short “u” sound (as in “love”) to render the elements of the pronunciation proportionate, and the whole complete. This form is demanded when the mood is strenuous.

Certain emotions require “love” to be delivered softly, tenderly, or brightly. Then the mouth should assume the smiling, or extended position, when the “la” sound may be less acute. But its influence must not be ignored in attack.

In observing these forms of the two words ("thou" and "love"), the broad sound of the vowels will not prove too apparent; but I have often found this process necessary to escape unduly closed lips, consequently muffled speech.

Long "e's," "a's," and other thin vowels often need to be given their most acute sound, by means of the more closed mouth, AT THE MOMENT OF ATTACK, whereupon the teeth may gradually be opened so as to increase the resonance of the voice, yet retain the purity of the vowel. In this case, we are providing for a similar leakage as that to which I have already referred.

ENUNCIATION

THE above treats of those connecting links between vowels known as consonants. We often hear a speaker who, though not deficient in tone, cannot deliver his words so that they may be understood. If we note his lips we find them inactive. The mouth is open, yet nothing issues but a succession of meaningless sounds. We may surmise his words, but cannot distinguish, nor are we moved by them. This speaker is neglecting his consonants. By their influence, the syllables should fall from his lips as drops of water, resting upon each other like pearls upon a thread. The flowing breath is the thread which binds them. This disregard of most important elements of speech is generally due to ignorance of the mechanical processes by which perfect enunciation is fluently and naturally acquired. It is to these technical points I now desire to give consideration. Just as the vowel sounds have their distinctive mouth positions, so have the consonants each their own particular lip and tongue operations.

The offices of both have direct bearing on neatness and facility of expression. In conversation, their employment has become more or less instinctive through unconscious, imitative faculties; but the natural laws which govern them are seldom studied, hence the working of the mechanical parts are so rarely understood that their application cannot be adapted to the unusual conditions which arise on the public platform. Let us, then, consider how these consonants are enunciated.

“B” requires the firm pressure of the lips, which holds the breath in check. The lips, though closed, should have the smiling extension. When they open they must part quickly, assuming at once the vowel position which follows. This sudden release of wind focusses it upon the vowel sound, ensuring clean, resonant attack.

“S” demands the hissing sound so easy to exaggerate with disturbing effect. People who lisp fail to concentrate the hiss through wrong action of the tongue and faulty position of the mouth, which fail to focus the breath. The mouth is held so loosely the wind scatters and creates a slovenly, sloughing sensation, as though stirring excessive moisture in the mouth. To control the breath in

such cases, students should direct and confine a delicate current towards one narrow point, verging upon the two middle teeth of the lower set. The tip of the tongue should lie against these teeth, and, by the assistance of the slightly contracted lower lip, form a shaft to convey the breath in a narrow current. Very little wind is required. The mouth then opens quickly, and the hiss dissolves pleasantly into the clear note of the vowel held by immovable lips and mouth.

“S” may also be sounded by nearly touching the roof of the mouth with the tip of the tongue. The breath then hisses through the aperture thus created. The choice of method will be governed by the sounds which either precede or follow the “s.”

“D” is prepared by the firm pressure of the tongue’s tip against the gums of the upper teeth, to keep in check the full, eager breath waiting to attack the vowel. The tongue is then released after a spasmodic pressure and the mouth opens at once, retaining the exact shape for the vowel until the final consonant of the syllable cuts the word. Attention to this detail ensures perfect attack and best possible tone.

“T” is produced by the same mechanical

means, but needs a lighter pressure and release of the tongue than the harder "d." The lip position of "t" is more extended than that of "d," and the facial expression smiling instead of serious, which involves a contracted mouth.

"F."—The upper teeth press the lower lip when the vowel precedes, and hold the breath in check as the tongue does in other cases. The breath pressure is soft in the attack of "f."

"V."—The operation is the same as on "f"; but the pressure of the teeth and breath is harder than that of "f."

"G."—In dealing with this consonant, the back, flat portion of the tongue presses against the rear surface of the roof of the mouth, holding the breath in check. The letter "g" represents two sounds: the hard, as in "gay"; soft (like "j"), as it occurs in "gentle."

"J" demands a similar application of the tongue to that of soft "g." The tip of the tongue lightly presses well up, over the gums of the upper teeth. To increase the tension, the front portion of the tongue adheres to the forward part of the hard palate.

"H."—We BLOW a breath with rounded lips when whistling. We aspirate "h" likewise,

but with the mouth in such open position as the vowel it precedes demands.

NOTE.—Short vowels precede an aspirated “h.” For example: “The horse”; short “e” in “the” (generally given the sound of short “u,” as in “but”). The long “e” precedes vowels such as “o” in “orange,” viz.: “The orange.”

It is but necessary to emit a light, loose, staccato breath, with the mouth extended, or fully open, to achieve the aspirate. Those to whom this does not come naturally often make difficulty for themselves by employing too fierce an effort. This method is not only unnatural, but sounds so exaggerated as to defeat the object in view.

“C” and “K.”—The mechanics of these consonants are similar to those of hard “g,” only that the tension of the tongue is more pronounced and its contraction occurs farther back in the mouth. It will be noticed that “g” is more open in attack than “k,” which requires closer formation.

“L,” as a preceding consonant, is enunciated by placing the tongue-tip over the gums of the upper teeth. Firm pressure of the tip assists attack of the succeeding vowel sound.

“L,” when a final, demands the same tonguing. If the tip remain on the gums, the mouth is extended to the smiling position, and the pressure of an increasing breath being continued, a bell-like vibration, describing appropriately beautiful tone-sensation, will be realised. Such expedients assist flowing delivery. If the tongue leave the gums before the wind-flow ceases, we have the effect of “ul-u” (the short “u” as in “but.”)

“M.”—The humming sensation of this consonant is derived from lips closely pressed. If they open before the breath ceases, a sound foreign to the word, ensues with disturbing effect, thus: “em-u” (short “u”). One often hears singers betray this defect.

“N.”—This sensation comes from the tongue being pressed against the upper gums as on “l,” but the tip lies flatter, and the pressures of tongue and breath are harder.

“P.”—This is produced by the same pressure of lips, though lighter, as “b.”

I should remind the reader that a difference exists between such consonants as “p—b,” “t—d,” “k—g,” “f—v,” “s—z,” “sh—zh,” “th” in “think,” “th” in “then,” etc. The first of each pair represents a soft and the second a hard sound. The mouth-position

and action in the case of the two consonants forming any of these pairs are the same, but greater pressure, tension, or contraction is required in the harder consonants, which may almost be regarded as vocal, than in the softer, which are mere breath impressions.

"Q" is a blend of "k" and "w." The lips must form the "w" and the tongue "k" simultaneously. (See "k" and "w.")

"R" may be rolled or have one simple turn. When rolled, the tongue-tip nearly touches the upper gums and is vibrated by a strong flow of breath. The simple turn, of general employment, consists of a quick upward brush of the tip, from the gums over the teeth and along the roof of the mouth. The tongue barely touches the latter. If any difficulty is experienced in mastering the turn, feel the action of the tongue when saying "ru," staccato, as in "rough." Next practise "ah-ru" (short "u"), running one into the other, making "ru" staccato. The tongue must be slightly stiff rather than softly flexible.

It is the common neglect of this turn or flick of the tongue that produces "r," which converts "are" into "ah." To pronounce "r" in "are," after holding the vowel "ah," give the light flick or simple upward turn of the tongue.

“Cultured” is often pronounced “cul-chawed,” because of the absence of the flick of the tongue necessary to enunciate “r.” To realise “d” at the end of this word, the tongue must be pressed against the upper gums, then removed suddenly.

“T” as “d,” but with less pressure of tongue to realise its lighter character.

“V” as “f,” but harder pressure of teeth on the under lip.

“W,” with lips closed, all but the smallest round opening, similar to that which would be employed in blowing lightly. The mouth opens quickly from this position to that of the vowel which follows.

Example: “Wi,” in “will.”

When “w” is associated with the aspirate, as in “when,” blow lightly through the “w” opening before attacking the combined “w” and “h,” then suddenly attack the succeeding vowel.

Examples: “When,” “which,” “why,” “wherefore.”

“X” is built up of short “e,” “k,” and “s,” and has the same effect in words as “cs.”

“Y” first demands the “e” position. To pronounce “young,” commence with acute “e” and follow on quickly with short “u”;

enunciate "ng" and you have the vowel element from the most resonant facial openings, and the true pronunciation of the complete word.

NOTE.—If the student does not analyse in this manner he will not readily be able to understand what is required in the way of mouth-positions for best results.

"Z" carries an influence similar to "S," only that it is harder in character and demands more tension of the breath, tongue, and vocal muscles.

"Ch."—The difference between this position and that of "j" is that whilst on "ch" the tongue-tip presses rather more directly against the gums over the upper teeth, the upper surface of the middle portion of the tongue does not touch the roof of the mouth so hard as in "j." The action is altogether lighter and looser, the sound being pointed, as it were, by the tongue-tip.

"Ng," as in "sing," calls for more tongue pressure than "n." Further, whilst the latter is secured by the tip, the "ng" intensity is acquired by pressing the middle of the tongue up against the roof of the mouth.

If the tongue does not take its proper position on "ng," such words as "coming" will

sound as "comin'." This occurs when the tongue lies at the base of the mouth.

"Th" as in "think." The tip of the tongue nearly touches the top of the upper teeth. The breath finds a passage over the tongue. Direct the breath on the tip as it inclines upwards, to intercept the wind.

"Th" as in "the." The tongue presses against the edges of the upper teeth to check the breath.

"Sh" in "wish." The feeling of tension is on the back part of the tongue, which rises towards, but does not touch, the roof of the mouth. On the other hand, the hiss of "s" employs the TIP of the tongue. The breath is directed upon the tip, which lies near, but does not touch, the gums over the upper teeth. The breath passes through the passage thus created.

"Zh," the sound which "s" has in "vision." In this, the tongue takes the same position as in "sh," but it is contracted and moves nearer the roof of the mouth.

"Wh," in "which," demands a slight waft of breath on the rounded lips, then the sustained short "i" by the half-open mouth, finally the mechanism noted under "ch."

Upon the swiftness, accuracy, and delicacy

with which the successive mechanical operations of the tongue and lips are realised, depend the quality and carrying power of a voice quite as much as upon the flow of breath. Consonants properly enunciated not only economise breath, but induce that flowing continuity of tone which comes naturally, without effort, and appeals to an audience.

In employing vowel and consonant positions, it should be borne in mind that the emotional character of the voice, required occasionally on any of them, must not be sacrificed to those positions. There is a bright and a sombre position for each vowel which does not destroy pronunciation. But appropriate facial expression will adjust all that.

I should here explain that the foregoing and many other directions in this book are of the nature of exercises for private practice. No pianoforte student can essay with success a composition demanding elaborate execution unless he has previously mastered scales and exercises so efficiently as to play difficult runs without thought or hesitation. After such study, his execution would become involuntary. It is thus with the elocutionary student. Before he can perfect his technique, he must

thoroughly understand the mechanical processes involved. Having done this, he should become so practised in the true forms of verbal expression that he is able to realise them unconsciously. Whilst speaking, there is plenty of necessary occupation without being compelled to remember each mechanical element comprised in the finished technique. The student should aim to acquire, by repeated practice, that unconsciousness of technical detail which confers upon him the restful consciousness of his own facile powers.

ARTICULATION

ARTICULATION represents the complete outlines of speech. The vowels supply the body colours, the consonants the high lights. Without articulation, the vowels have no form; without consonants, word-pictures have no perspective—no character. The smooth and proportionate blending of vowel and consonant sounds—appropriate emphasis of the former, and graceful inflection upon the latter—lead to that clear expressiveness of delivery we describe as articulation. The student should acquire this art by that slow practice which enables him to apply the various mechanical operations without thought in appropriate proportions. Although syllables should be distinct, they must be united in flowing phrases. Regularity of breath-pressure contributes to that evolution of facial expression which facilitates continuity.

EMPHASIS

EMPHASIS upon a syllable is acquired by increased pressure of the breath simultaneously with that contraction of the muscles which takes place preparatory to coughing. Emphasis is employed to make the meaning of a sentence clear. If a writer is correctly understood, his precise meaning may be conveyed by emphasising the most essential words of his sentences. By laying stress on the wrong word, it is easy to convey an erroneous impression, just as it becomes in the case of inappropriate inflections. Take the sentence, "Have you done this?" If the object is to ascertain if a thing has been accomplished, regardless of what the act consists, then the emphasis would occur upon "done." Were it necessary to know who had done a certain act, the stress would fall upon "you." "Have you done this?" Accent on "this," would show a desire for the act to be specified. Accent on "Have," suggests impatience, such as might occur in the case of concealment or prevarication.

Prominence may be given a word or syllable without actual increase of breath-pressure or voice, if the important word is held longer than the other at the same power and pitch. In solemn phrases, such methods are appropriate, as they afford that most eloquent of all emotions—suppressed feeling. A silent pause often gives impressive emphasis to a profound thought.

Emphasis frequently needs to be supported by prolonged power of voice after the percussion of the accent. Where such necessity arises, the tone is concentrated upon the vowel sound. When the vowel is followed by a consonant, the latter does much of the sustaining. It is then we make our “l’s,” “m’s,” and “n’s” sing or hum.

INFLECTIONS

INFLECTIONS are the delicate curves or modulations of voice, which promote flowing cadences in speech and obviate angularities in vocal movements. Were it not for inflections we should have a succession of stilted intervals without any modulation to connect and weave them into consecutive, flowing form. The effect would be: a number of staccato pitches bearing no sympathetic connection. In conversational speech, every one employs them to a greater or lesser extent, unconsciously. It is when it becomes necessary to develop the voice to a higher or louder pitch on a public platform that the inexperienced speaker finds something is missing. Precisely! Never having recognised the part inflection plays in ordinary conversation, the novice has neglected to tune this instrument to "concert pitch." His words, therefore, fall with a short, dull thud, devoid of that continuity conducive to vital carrying power. In the absence of reinforcements (in the form of sustained inflections), there is

heard but detached blows of sound, monotonous in regularity, indistinguishable in purport.

Whilst the tone in the first attack and sustaining power of a vowel should be full, even, and strong, the vocal quality of the inflection is of necessity lighter—more of the falsetto character. The power in this quality should vanish at the close of the upward inflection. Much depends upon the rapidity of the upward inflection for its perfect security and grace. With practice a speaker may easily attain greater and greater range in upward inflections through this falsetto. By experiment, the student will soon be able to ascertain the compass of his ordinary, or chest voice, likewise his falsetto limits. But it must be remembered that, whether in strong or light passages, vocal efficiency cannot be attained without a steady, even flow of breath. In dealing with inflections, it should be borne in mind that the voice must often return to the starting point defined by the pitch of the last deep chest tone. This play of voice constitutes a circle or loop, which will possibly be understood by the following diagram:



The inflection represents a succession of rising pitches. These are so connected by breath influence that the course of the upward modulation seems to take the form of the rising portion of a loop, thus:



Often in descending, the direction of the voice would seem to describe the remaining portion of the loop, thus:



It may or may not be as I describe; but it will be helpful to the student to accept this theory and to realise that a chain of inflections often creates a series of rings or loops evolving out of the first and greater curve which seems to describe the initial inflection movement.

Observe the course of inflections in delivering a prolonged exclamation on the letter O! It will realise the outline of the letter just as the lips define it in correct speaking:



The outside loop describes the courses of the

upward and downward inflections, which, when combined, complete the closed curve:



In teaching novices stage declamation, I have often had to describe with my finger and arm the movement of the voice, sketching in the air the curves, circles, and straight lines the tone follows. The quickness with which the hand moves indicates the speed demanded by each particular phrase.

The courses of a combined upward and downward inflection (as in O) are in accordance with the following diagram:



The pitch herein ends slightly lower than it began, in order to escape anything approaching a monotonous or musical interval.

Thus it will be seen "O!" represents an exclamation containing two distinct impressions. The upward inflection sounds the note of inquiry, thus:



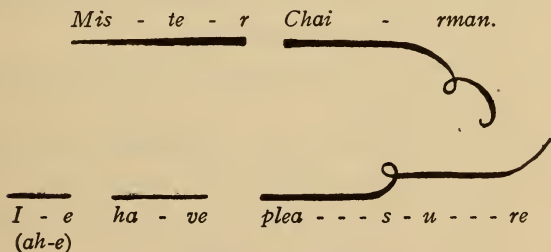
The downward inflection gives the note of conviction, thus:



In this way, the loop is completed.

To acquire facility of inflection and buoyant flexibility of voice, practise a succession of upward and downward inflections on long "o" in one breath in accordance with the above diagram. This exercise will realise a series of loops.

If the student experiment with the following brief example, it may possibly enable him to understand the technique of the stronger inflections. I will employ the familiar introduction to a speech: "Mister Chairman."



EXPLANATION OF DIAGRAM

The voice on "Mister" is sustained in the singing or humming form, on one pitch, as

described by the line. Increase the pressure of breath and the hold on the short vowel "a" in "chair." Commence the downward modulation of the voice, on this vowel, with increasing breath-pressure, continuing it on the sustained consonant "r" to the level pitch indicated under "m" in "man." Continue the same falling direction on the vowel "a" in "man," concluding this flow by the sustained consonant "n."

It will be found that the two great essentials are: sustaining the vowel sounds and causing the consonants to vibrate. The latter seem to whir-r in circular form (as a wheel in motion), and for this reason I have placed small loops in the diagram as they occur.

Where the lines are thickest, the breath-flow and vocal power are strongest.

The relative elevations of the lines indicate approximate pitch.

From the above brief examples, it will be realised what is necessary to make the voice carry and at the same time afford that variety of intonation which obviates monotony of pitch. Inflections, such as I have suggested, assist expressive contrasts of vocal colour, add not only flowing delivery, but something approaching musical form, to speech, which,

however eloquent in thought, would otherwise sound dry and tedious. There is much analogy between the vocal colours used in speech and those employed by the graphic artist in landscape painting. All are governed by the fundamental laws of that contrast which secures variety. Each distinctive shade of inflection expresses some particular tinge of emotional feeling. Three ingredients, so to speak, mainly provide colour:

- (1) The lip and mouth influences, which define the respective facial positions necessary for the vowel and consonant sounds of perfect pronunciation and enunciation.
- (2) The breath.
- (3) The contraction, in varying degrees, of the muscles of the chest and throat.

As I have already pointed out elsewhere, an even, continuous flow of breath is essential to the elocutionist. In executing inflections, firm wind currents are demanded in order to acquire the security of perfect vocal movement. In attempting an inflection, it is necessary to sound the key-note, or pitch, from which the inflection starts on its upward course, in such a sustained form as will cause the breath current to flow swiftly. The close

of the first sustained note should, however, be tapered slightly so as to blend more readily with the lighter tone employed in the rising inflection. The impetus gained by the swift setting in motion of the wind will carry the voice on its upward course with ease and facility. It may be noticed that the voice becomes softer and moves quicker as it rises until the tone evaporates at an extreme height, leaving no suggestion of definite pitch. Thus:



The downward inflection starts from an equally sustained base, and diminishes in the same form as the upward modulation:



In executing the two movements combined, as in

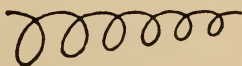


representing the "O!"—previously referred to—a brief emphasis should be given by an extra "push" of breath when the voice

reaches the top of the loop where the downward inflection begins—the turning-point. No greater power is required, however, than that which just serves to give the command of voice requisite for the facile turn at this point:



It should be the object of the reciter to cultivate a flowing delivery. The great charm of an accomplished speaker lies in the smooth current of neatly articulated words, which bear the true emotional spirit they are intended to possess. It might be imagined that inflections would rather disturb this continuity by preventing a smooth attack on the next syllable. It is not so, however, if the reciter imbue his mind with the idea that on the same pitch which an inflection ceases, the next tone, inflection, or utterance, generally begins. He should remember that the movement of the voice often describes an almost unbroken succession of curves, which form themselves into loops of various sizes, thus:



When one listens to the sustained vibrations of a consonant such as "l" or "n," they suggest the swift whirring of a small wheel impelled by some force. In elocution, the breath is the power. I have found it an aid to the breath to associate the wheel theory with the vibrations of consonant inflections. The small loops or rings indicate the wheel sensations, which the student should cultivate. They will assist sustained tone and flowing vocal movement.

Fantastic as the idea may possibly seem to those who have not studied the matter and been forced to this conclusion by the necessity of impressing continuity of tone upon students, my deductions, I am convinced, are founded upon the natural laws which govern tone-movement. But if the reader should be disposed to reject this theory, at least let him endeavour to study the idea I have endeavoured to impress upon his mind by means of the above expedients.

In private practice, considerable power should be given to inflections, and they must move slowly. In public performance, they will often need to be so light and swift as to become almost imperceptible. In conversation, the voice is constantly moving in the

loop form I have described by the alternations of upward and downward inflections. Every syllable, more or less, realises this circular course; but so delicate is the movement, close observation is necessary to realise the fact. It is the result of involuntary efforts to escape vocal monotony. In such cases, instinct guides us aright.

I may here suggest to the student that he should endeavour to speak those successive words which seem to demand it, on one pitch, if possible, and in doing so preserve the same power of voice in order to give the somewhat monotonous, colourless tone which must often precede an emphasis, or series of dramatic modulations.

The study of inflections, here indicated, is for the student rather than the speaker—for private practice rather than for public performance. In public speaking, or reading, the voice will follow known and tried paths, but must do so unconsciously. Let the speaker and reader endeavour to give the full force of the words used, and inflection will come naturally. But it will not do this unless by careful study we have accustomed the voice to inflect, and become emancipated from the dreary dominion of monotone.

ATTACK

[T will be noticed that I have employed the term "attack" in these pages. Lest its meaning has not been understood, I will now endeavour to explain its nature and importance. By "attack" I mean the initial percussive sound of the voice in pronunciation. One may discharge a continuous current of breath through the mouth without uttering a sound. If we desire to articulate softly and smoothly, we unconsciously create a contraction of certain muscles of the chest and throat, as though preparing to cough. This slight involuntary tension creates vocal tone. We do not naturally set or hamper the throat by restraint which will cause the voice to sound throaty; hence I say the action is involuntary because spontaneous and natural. When the action is not involuntary we intensify or exaggerate the operation, rendering it unnatural. If the voice is to assume various degrees of power in attack, then we must govern, to some extent, the muscular contraction. To do this, simply act as though you were about to cough

silently. If hard percussion attack of the voice is demanded, then prepare to cough harder. Regulate this preparation for attack to the power demanded. Supposing the speaker were about to utter "Ah!" he should fill his lungs, hold his breath firmly, but lightly, then release the pent-up breath suddenly upon the vowel, supporting the tone by a swift, increasing pressure of wind. This attack should be staccato, and convey, in the first impact of breath upon the vocal ligaments, a single crackle. To understand my meaning, produce, softly, a quick succession of short "u's" (as in "but") very staccato, whilst the breath is continuously flowing with a firm pressure from the chest. The above attack can be employed on all words commencing with a vowel. This concentration of breath gives the best and most resonant quality of voice. It contributes a clean attack. The tension I have mentioned, and breath currents, can be so regulated as to afford a soft note, with no perceptible percussion in it, yet a neatly concentrated tone as opposed to a scattered note containing distracting elements, fatal to clear, sonorous quality.

Another form of attack may be given by discharging the contents of the lungs, without

any regulation of wind-flow, in one blast—a swift “push” of the breath. This is suitable for single exclamations where the sound of the breath may not be out of place, such as “shame!”

Still another attack may be found in the softer and slower sigh of breath which does not give explosive character to the sound (“Ho” in “home”).

Each attack, in turn, is specially applicable to some particular mood or emotion.

In dealing with vowels, the mouth must always be found in the proper position for receiving the attack of breath. Where consonants are concerned, the tongue or lips, as the case may be, should likewise promptly be at their post. In the development of speech there is often little time to dwell upon such details in the way of mouth-positions, etc., as I have mentioned; but the speaker must practise articulation, slowly, at first, in order to acquire clean attack, efficient breath, glib tongue, flexible lips, and expressive countenance, all of which bear prominently upon finished elocution. With practice, that which is at first an effort will eventually become involuntary.

SUSTAINING

THE speaker acquires emphasis on words by attack and sustained tone. The power of the latter may either be equal in volume throughout the vowel sound or increased. If the former, he dwells longer on the main vowel sound of the syllable or word; if the latter, he describes what in music is known as a crescendo. A crescendo in speaking is much swifter than in singing. The swelling of the tone, therefore, must be quick, almost fierce. This will necessitate firm, sudden, and increased flow of breath, and more forceful contraction of the muscles to which I have alluded under "Attack." Firm control of the chest is the dominant factor, a fixed mouth on the vowel sound being almost as indispensable. It is sustained breath which ensures the grace and symmetry of flowing phrases; the delicacy and colour variety of inflections; the stately movement of heroic utterances. The spasmodic speaker, deficient in breath control, reminds me of a pump devoid of suction—neither can manage the requisite flow.

Connective speaking demands more prolongation of consonants than singing. Indeed, in some instances, consonants are held longer than the vowel sounds. With such words as "known" on long upward inflections the consonants fully share the honours with the vowels. Sustained "m's," "n's," "ng's," or "l's" (in the humming form) act like oil on the orator's machinery. But the breath behind them must be strong, swift, enduring. If one make his consonants tell, there is little difficulty in acquiring vocal flow. As I have previously observed, they string the beaded vowels together in one continuous chain. Inflections suspend them in graceful festoons, which lend picturesque form to prosaic ideas. The most perfect matter may be ruined by imperfect delivery; on the other hand, common-place words are rendered beautiful by the grace of symmetrical diction.

PUNCTUATION

IN ordinary conversation, speakers punctuate their remarks more or less instinctively, but often incorrectly. In babyhood, they have learned to talk by rote. In school-days, they acquire some knowledge of the uses of "stops" by the process of imitation. They seldom analyse and grip the mechanism of verbal punctuation. A person observes the marks but fails to understand the processes of thought which prompt them. In conversation, a speaker will often take breath anywhere and anyhow, regardless of awkward interruptions which must occur in the flow and sense of his sentences. Bad punctuation may pass muster in private conversation, but on the platform the effect becomes so distorted as to render it difficult for the audience to distinguish the drift, even, of the speaker's remarks. If a man attempt to punctuate according to acknowledged rules, on the stage he may minimise and not give due effect to his "stops" because he has not accentuated them sufficiently for a large room. He is unable to

do so because, not being familiar with the component parts of the machinery he uses, he is unable to strengthen the weakest of them sufficiently to give effect to their operation. It is necessary, then, to study some of the sources whence effective punctuation derives its force.

Let us commence with the comma (,). The merest schoolboy will at once say, "Stop long enough to count one," and be perfectly accurate, so far as he goes; but will not go far enough. Generally, when a comma occurs an upward inflection is involved, and this moves on the syllable or word immediately preceding it. Now, this inflection requires more breath-pressure and rather longer sustentation of tone in a large hall than in a small room. The breath, therefore, should be delivered firmly and strongly upon the vowel from which the inflection springs. It becomes lighter as the chest voice dissolves into the falsetto. Where two commas form something of the nature of a parenthesis, the words between them, bearing no essential part of the text, should be spoken on a slightly lower pitch, in a softer tone, and the last comma of the two need not reach the height of inflection which the syllable before the preceding comma had touched.

The parenthesis [()] contains what should be treated as an "aside" and dealt with as I have described in the preceding case.

The interrogation point (?) demands a stronger and longer upward or downward inflection, as the case may be, followed by a more definite pause. The pitch of the sentence to which it is attached should be sufficiently low or high to permit of one or the other. The interrogation (?) denotes a question. It terminates a sentence much as does the full point, only that it may demand an upward or downward inflection. The respective modulations all have specific meanings. Each is governed by the particular sense involved, or the word emphasised. Take the question: "What time is it?" If "time" be emphasised, the voice would fall; if the stress be upon "what," the inflection at the end of the sentence should be upward. "Would you" is capable of several different interpretations. As a question pure and simple, the voice should rise. A falling voice would suggest expectation. The same inflection, with power, might mean defiance.

The period or full point (.) denotes the termination of a complete sentence, and is used where an exclamation or interrogation is

not involved. The voice thereon falls by downward modulation, which terminates decisively on a low pitch. The pause on a period must be governed by circumstances. It is understood to be long enough to count four.

The semi-colon (;) requires the voice to fall; but as it denotes that the words following bear some relation to the previous text, the voice does not descend quite so decisively in pitch or power or remain so long as on the period. The pause, too, though brief, should not become so short as that of the comma.

The colon (:) requires the voice to fall much in the same form as the semi-colon. It precedes a quotation, an example, an explanation, enumeration of details, etc. It connects parts of sentences, less intimately associated with a previous part than where a semi-colon would be employed. The colon focuses the mind upon the most essential point of a sentence. That which follows this mark of punctuation should be delivered slowly and impressively, with the confident tone of conviction.

The exclamation (!) demands explosive tones, or strong accent, upon the word which it follows. Pressure of the lips or tongue, as the case may be, upon the consonant, before

delivering the percussion attack of the breath upon the vowel should be firm and accompanied by contraction of the muscles of the chest and throat and sudden breath-pressure. The voice may have to remain at a stationary pitch, rise, or fall, just as the emotion may demand.

A dash (—) denotes a pause, and may prelude changes of pitch and mood. It also concentrates the attention of an audience upon a salient point, and calls for impressive modulations of tone. The dash delays and accentuates, often with effect, the point of a jocular or grave observation.

Rules of punctuation, like all others, are subject to exceptions governed by the sense of the text. This branch may be helpfully studied on reference to an excellent little work written by Mr. T. Bridges.¹ No one should be without the valuable yet simple little brochure.

¹ 37, Maclise Road, West Kensington, London.

MOOD

“MOOD” indicates some particular frame of mind. A speaker or reciter is compelled to represent in his voice many diverse emotions indicating various temperaments. A single word or phrase may be made to convey several meanings. In spontaneous exhibitions of passion, the face often indicates the nature of inner feelings that the words fail to convey. On the other hand, facial expression may neutralise the strength of severe words. The reciter in a large hall is often so imperfectly distinguished that his facial play lends little support to his words beyond that which facial expression undoubtedly adds to tone through appropriate pronunciation and enunciation. Every element in an elocutionist's technique has influence, direct or indirect, upon those characteristic modulations which give expression to emotional words. A faulty breath creates wrong emphasis; an unsympathetic pitch strikes the jarring note; a wrongly directed inflection conveys the reverse of what is intended. In successful

elocution the mood of a word must not only be accurately diagnosed but felt, looked, and expressed by means of the most perfect technical methods. Any lapse of the technique will result in the destruction of that expressiveness which realises the mood or spirit of the written thought. Under various heads I deal with the mechanical operation of the technical parts of the elocutionary machine. But even the rules suggested therein must at times be modified to meet the requirements of exceptional moods. Words, after all, are but the medium by which humanity expresses its feelings. Words that do not accomplish this are meaningless. When inadequately expressed, their emotional significance is felt neither by the speaker nor his hearers. A laughing mouth may disguise the solemnity of pathetic words and bright sentiments be dulled by pouting lips. Therefore, facial expression must strongly influence mood. Pronunciation and enunciation likewise affect it. Correct pronunciation delivered without regard to the mood may convey misleading impressions.

A capable master of singing recently called in question a mouth-position of a certain vowel as inferior to another suggested, which

certainly gave the bald sound of the vowel. But the latter did not realise the required mood, therefore I had modified the mouth-position. This teacher had not thought of the spirit which the word was intended to convey, so whilst he unwittingly uttered a good but inappropriate tone, the word became meaningless.

Possibly the reader will now understand that he must first of all realise the mood—his pronunciation may still be clear and correct even if he have to modify his vowel by either imparting a brighter tone with a smiling mouth, or pathetic utterance through oval lips.

Consonants should likewise be treated in accordance with the sense in which words are employed. If a soft “s” is converted into a fierce hiss by strong and prolonged breath flow, we find that breath may destroy the mood.

We enunciate “d” by pressure of the tongue. If that pressure be too hard instead of light, there is an end to the gentle spirit in which the word may be intended.

Vice versa, we shall have feebleness instead of stout resolution.

Mood influences the strength and length of

our words and inflections; tells us whether tones should be crisp or sustained. In fact, we cannot speak or sing intelligently without taking cognisance of it.

When a person, in private conversation, gives expression to his feelings, he reveals his mood, but cannot give due effect to it in public because he has not the elocutionary knowledge to enable him to put into his words the significance they should bear.

Whilst upon this subject, I must call attention to the difference between the contrasting methods of the speaker, the actor, and the reader. Elocutionists, as a rule, are taught too much upon theatrical lines. Readers, actors, and public speakers should work on very different principles so far as mood is concerned. The actor impersonates a particular character. His own personality must become absorbed in that creation. Here we must have some exaggeration. The reader, on the other hand, represents only the author. In poetry, he is the poet; in history, the historian. It is the author's mood, whatever his style or spirit, to which he must attain. Dangers he should avoid are those of intruding himself, or misconceiving his author. The speaker represents but himself if he would be

accepted as sincere and convincing; not the casual self of the informal home circle, but the man of earnestness and conviction who has a definite message to deliver, or duty to perform. He must prove effective, but not affected. Stage utterances would be out of place in the pulpit; heroic methods adapted to simple subjects result in burlesque. In dealing with moods, therefore, both reader and speaker should avoid undue exaggeration. Their emotions ought to be delicately suggested rather than enforced.

FACIAL INFLUENCE

THE face is the index of the mind. However well chosen the words, clear the articulation, appropriate the gesture, the audience is unlikely to be thrilled with the emotion a speaker may seek to convey, if the face fail to indicate the true state of the mind. The elocutionist, as well as the singer, should, therefore, not only feel all that his words express, but LOOK IT. An expressionless face discounts the soulfulness by which the speaker is supposed to be swayed. Audiences realise changes of mood first of all from the facial indications which almost invariably precede those of the actual words. Changes of expression mark the alternations or conflicts of mood as specifically as do inflections of voice. No one can be understood to mean one thing whilst looking the reverse. There is a still more important consideration. The requisite technical processes cannot be fully realised if all the forces of one's nature are not working in complete harmony. It is easy enough to hear in the dark whether a person is making

an observation with a smile on his face. In conversation, the same words may assume various meanings, according to the respective manner of utterance. Expression of the face influences character of tone in this way: Mouth and lip positions employed in speaking or singing are numerous, constantly defining changes and combinations of tone. Each gives a particular turn or expression to a word. If the face illustrate the mood, the vocal mechanism is more likely to operate automatically and discharge its functions effectively without thought on the part of the speaker. In pronunciation, each vowel sound has assigned it a definite mouth-position. Each consonant demands a particular employment of the lips and tongue. These cannot be perfectly directed without the mouth assuming those shapes which permit them to perform their respective functions. Facial expression prompts the mouth, lips, and tongue to natural, simultaneous action; thus we secure spontaneous impressions. By the slightest movement of the lips or mouth, one may change the character of the voice. That being so, a student has but to ascertain the operation of the various movements and he may eradicate the undesirable qualities of his

tone. Attention to facial influences will do much, if not all, that is necessary in this direction. (The breath has a share in the responsibility.) For example: I have heard a speaker attempt to deliver a light, pleasant, observation with a voice so hard, throaty, and severe as to quite misrepresent the spirit of his words. Such instances constituted a distortion of tone, therefore of sense. Being on a public platform, the speaker could not be natural. Thinking to make the voice carry by physical force, he applied muscular restraint, as follows: Looked anxious and severe, set his throat to control his wind, compressed his cheek, rounded his mouth with tense lips, leaving but a small opening. No wonder his pleasantry fell unsympathetically upon the ears of others. The course he should have taken was as follows: Assumed a smiling expression, which would have given extended lips, maintained a comfortable but steady flow of breath, and confined his pitch to a lower and more conversational tone. This position of the mouth would have made it well-nigh impossible for the speaker to compress his throat, and the voice must have been brighter, more silvery, instead of hard and oppressive. The rounded mouth, slightly drawn in at the

corners, acquires tone-fulness, sympathy, and pathos. The above-named positions represent the two emotional extremes. Variants of them provide many intervening characteristics and are worthy of careful study, so far as they apply to elocution. Most of these are treated under the various heads where they may be considered to belong.

In treating "Facial Influence," I have dealt first with the mouth and lips because these have direct bearing upon tone quality. The eyes, whilst stimulating to some extent the organs of speech through the channel of sympathy, relate more particularly to manner. The power of the eye, however, should not be under-rated. It can be made to excite many emotions. With the help of the brows, the eye may express surprise, horror, contentment, or any mood of the emotional gamut. It appears to take many forms and lights. As a matter of fact, these changes are largely suggested by movements of the brows, lids, and lashes. The pupils of the eyes certainly do expand and contract, under the influence of light, shade, or emotional excitement. We have most of us observed what we regarded as a flashing eye (probably the snapping of the lids) and the sudden gleam of the excited

orb (the contraction of the pupil possibly). These, however, can only be influenced by unrestrained abandonment on the part of the speaker to his emotional sympathies. He can, however, command such mechanical forces as his eyelids, eyebrows, and muscles of the forehead. But in the employment of these he must enlist the co-operation of his mouth, mind, and face. He may study the action of all these features by observing in private life and from the auditorium of a theatre the working of the human face under the spell of various passions. Simple as they may seem, it is well to charge the mind with a few fundamental expedients, such as the following:

The eyes open wide and quickly under surprise, delight, and kindred impulses.

Open wide in uncontrolled anger, and the brows are knitted.

Close slowly in placid thought or slow cunning.

Close partially, spasmodically, with knitted brows, in treachery, or cunning that is surprised, threatened, or vanquished.

Darken softly under relaxation of mind.

Lighten under mental agitation.

Open with fixed, immovable stare, me-

chanically, under deep thought or contemplation.

Smile or twinkle in humour.

Dull or expressionless when "out of the picture," and the mind should become inactive.

It is unnecessary to attempt to account for all the changes of expression the eyes assume. Aided by the sympathy of the facial influences, undoubtedly they emit a wide range of emotional paroxysms. All, however, spring from the workings of the speaker's mind and thus become automatic. The patent axiom, therefore, must be: **FEEL WHAT YOU SAY, LOOK WHAT YOU FEEL.** In other words, Be sincere. Conviction weighs.

The poise of the head is the background which throws up the facial picture. A few examples are sufficient to indicate the impressions these may stimulate:

The head held high and firm may indicate courage, defiance, scorn, etc.

The head elevated, poised in a listening attitude, suggests inquiry.

Resting upon the chest, it may denote despair, grief, resignation.

Thrust forward, with extended chin, it may realise aggression, hate.

Tossed upward—derision, contempt, indifference.

Shaken slowly—sorrowful, regret, mild dissent.

Shaken quickly—either pleasant or contemptuous disagreement, according to the play of countenance.

DEMEANOUR

THE bearing of a speaker prior to addressing an audience is a matter of some importance. Whilst seated on the platform he is, as stage parlance puts it, "out of the picture," therefore his manner ought to remain quietly dignified and unobtrusive. He should take no cognisance of the audience—not seem mindful of their presence. Restlessness, anxiety of countenance, fidgeting of any kind, are to be avoided. If he have occasion to acknowledge the private remarks addressed to him by a supporter on the platform, he should acknowledge the civility so quietly as not to attract the attention of the audience in any way. He must resist any temptation towards the usual preliminary of a nervous man in the way of coughing or clearing his throat. His general manner should be that of one who has come to listen thoughtfully to some one else rather than that of a speaker impressed with the importance of his own personality. Now, these suggestions may appear to the young speaker as of little moment, but they

are really of grave consequence, for the reason that any inappropriateness of deportment is likely to prejudice the mind of the audience in such a way as to disturb sympathetic receptiveness. When the orator rises to speak, let him do so with deliberate, dignified confidence. In standing, he should preserve an easy balance upon one foot, with the other advanced diagonally in front, so that his body may sway occasionally from one to the other. It is important, however, that he should execute no oft-repeated pendulum movement, but when he has occasion to change the poise of his frame, should do so with a slow and easy sway of body. Such movements ought always to be exercised on an emphasised syllable of a word which he desires to impress upon his hearers. Unlike the concert singer, the speaker may occasionally allow his eyes to rest upon members of the audience in easy succession, as though he were addressing a particular member of the assemblage. He should not, however, except in rare cases, point his finger at any person. In selecting the portion of the room where he desires to direct his gaze under such circumstances, he should take care that the individual is seated well back from the front

rows, otherwise the shorter range of vision will cramp his body and be likely to result in awkward attitudes. Although a speaker's face may assume expressions illustrative of his moods, when he is indulging in a joke at which his hearers are likely to break into laughter, he should preserve a grave face in order that he may not appear to over-estimate the pungency of his wit. There is another exceptional instance in which a speaker is not compelled to illustrate his words by the expression of his face. This occurs whilst indulging in severely critical remarks, when he has no disposition to become fierce or too personal in his denunciation. He may then reduce the sting of his comments to some extent by adopting a pleasantly smiling expression. The contrast herein is frequently as effective as when impassively delivering an extremely humorous joke. He may often minimise the effect of demonstrations of disapproval by a quiet smile and indulgent manner.

I treat gesture in another chapter, and will, therefore, now but briefly warn the speaker against extravagant gyrations of the arm or eccentric movements of the body, unless such are necessary to give point to exceptional

words by way of illustration. In thoughtful utterances, the manner of the speaker should bear the semblance of calm reflection. His pitch, inflections, and sustaining power of voice ought, therefore, to be in harmony with this contemplative mood; in fact, all that he looks and does must be perfectly in sympathy with the significance of his words. If his remarks be punctuated by applause, the orator should immediately pause, and, without acknowledging the demonstration, stand in a calm, waiting attitude until the interruptions cease, when he must resume his speech at the point where his last audible word ended, or recommence the interrupted sentence. He should not acknowledge, even by an inclination of the head, any applause that may greet him at the conclusion of the speech, but resume his seat with the same dignified self-suppression which has marked his demeanour "when out of the picture."

GESTURE

APPROPRIATE gesture is demanded not only to enhance the impressiveness of emphatic words, but to relieve the monotony created by an impassive figure. Young and inexperienced speakers are often prompted by enthusiasm to overdo this branch of the subject. It should, therefore, be the rule to attempt as few arm movements as possible. Those which are employed must be thoroughly appropriate and well rehearsed. Effective, involuntary gestures sometimes do occur, but are not to be relied upon. It becomes necessary, therefore, to study the mechanism of all gestures, and it is safer to begin with the simplest. Before commencing rehearsals, the student should realise the fundamental laws which govern such actions, the first of which is evolutionary development. That which is angular is incomplete, therefore undeveloped. Just as we seek to avoid angularities in tone progression and artistic accomplishments generally, so should we avoid them in gesture. As a flowing voice proceeds by curves, so

should the arm, wrist, and hand move in gesture. An arm movement calls into play five sections of the limb, which must be made to move in harmonious sequences. When perfectly employed the course they take describes the curve of a half-circle or loop. Thus we avoid an angular movement. The first section to be set in motion when the arm hangs at the side is the upper-arm (that portion from the shoulder to the elbow); next, the forearm, wrist, hand; lastly, the fingers. One might imagine the hand first to move in raising the arm; but it must not be so considered. The leverage comes from the shoulder. The upper-arm commences to sketch the outline of the curve, then the elbow-joint comes into play, when the upper-arm becomes partially raised and the forearm takes up the development; the wrist-joint having commenced to bend, the hand continues the movement; finally, the curved fingers come into play, completing the half-circle. In the downward gesture, the shoulder-joint acts first, next the elbow, then the wrist.

I describe the movement in this form, but the student, if he prefer, may deal with it in the following way:

The arm is hanging at the side (close to the

side). In raising it, describe an upward sweep of the hand in the form of nearly a half-circle. To do this without bending the respective joints I have mentioned would give a stiff arm and an awkward movement. Bend the joints slowly, one after the other, at regular intervals, whilst the arm is moving, carrying the hand turned downward from the wrist until the arm has nearly reached its fullest height, then continue the movement in its flowing form by turning the hand upward and backward, until stopped by the wrist. Retain this attitude for a moment, the whole body remaining at rest on the pause of the hand. In lowering the arm, extend the whole arm well forward, allowing the respective sections, one after the other, to descend limply. In this movement, carry the hand bent back on the wrist until the whole arm reaches the point where it becomes stretched out horizontally. The hand comes into line with the now stiff arm, which descends quicker from this point. As it descends from the horizontal position, the hand should be turned downward (until blocked by the under part of the wrist) in rhythm with the descending arm. The effect of this hand expedient is to lengthen or continue the sweep of the downward curve.

This method of gesture produces a supple effect. The arm in rising or falling should not move in line with the body, but proceed somewhat diagonally, so as to avoid the stiffness of parallel lines. Curves are essential in gesture and movement.

Supposing a speaker's right hand was resting upon his watch chain, near the left pocket, and he desired to gesticulate by extending his arm to the right. He should not send it out straight and stiff, but observe the same development which took place in the foregoing example. The arm would then be set in motion at the elbow-joint; his wrist would work next, but, to give the curve impression of flowing continuity, the hand would remain bent down and pointed towards the watch pocket until it had described half the curve and pointed out towards the audience; then the hand would slowly bend back on the upper portion of the wrist as it had done in the previous arm-elevating movement.

The hand and fingers in such cases act, as the sailors say of their ropes, like so much "slack" to be "paid out" when the leeway renders it necessary. These ever-essential curves, it will be found, enter into nearly everything. In stage movements, they constantly recur.

An actor to move from the footlights to the back of the stage has to "tack" almost as assiduously as a yachtsman "beating" up in the teeth of a wind. But as the latter comes under the head of "Movement," dealt with in another chapter I must not here pursue this branch of the subject.

Straight lines, as I have indicated, are to be avoided in gestures. To elevate the arm and point to the stars with a straight, stiff arm, without even a curvature of the hand, would not only appear ungainly, but must prove such an uplifting as to ludicrously disarrange the setting of the speaker's apparel at a moment when he requires the full possession of his dignity. The arm raised at a comfortable height and curved slightly inward, the hand inclining in the same direction, will generally obviate any such embarrassment and result in a more graceful pose.

Should the speaker's hand have occasion to traverse an imaginary horizon, travelling from right to left, there is something incongruous between a stationary stare at a given point right before him and the moving hand. It is a simple and effective cure for such a situation if he follow his moving hand with his eyes. This gives a sympathetic and

graceful movement of the head and poise of the body agreeable to the audience.

Whenever a speaker uplifts a hand in face of the audience, he should never expose the flat palm, or the full breadth of the back of the hand. This member should always appear in profile. When it is impossible, an elongated fist arranged by curved fingers will do if the smallest point is towards the line of the spectators' vision.

The exceptions to this rule will arise when illustrating such phrases as "Back, sir!" and "No, no!" The speaker in these cases might elevate the open palm of one or both hands.

The left arm being less supple than the right should have more practice than its fellow. There is, however, some difficulty in the simultaneous employment of these members, and the variety of desirable gestures available is limited; therefore elaboration is not often safe or desirable. When such gestures are adopted, the movements of each arm should describe the same curve and be developed and timed on precisely the same lines. Each should commence and finally resolve into momentary, statuesque repose with absolute precision. The slightest hesitation of either arm, or the hand, which is the last to come

to rest in describing the final outline of the curve, must not occur. It is unnecessary, however, that the left hand should reach quite the same altitude as the right, so long as the outlines of each arm are fairly harmonious.

Restricted movements of the arm and hand result in ungraceful angles and spasmodic action. A free and supple limb is indispensable. This cannot be acquired without appreciating the radius to which a sinuous arm must be confined. In employing either the right or the left, it should move from an easy restful position at the side of one's form. The right hand obtains its freest radius to the right of the body, and should move outward and upward in the curved direction to the full extent of the limb. In bringing the arm back to the left, the hand should not pass beyond the centre of the chest. If the simple bend of the elbow is relied upon, the limit of the left movement will be naturally and accurately defined. To exceed the point mentioned would result in an ungainly twist of the body and disturbance of balance. The complete gesture will describe a circle or full loop. The left arm must define a similar movement. At the conclusion of this figure, the hands come down to rest on the right thigh. The hand to

be extended straight in front of the speaker should move upward, pointing downwards on a stiff arm until nearly horizontal, when it comes gradually to the pointing position, reaching the indicating attitude as the arm comes to a pause at the horizontal point. The hand should not then be in a straight line with the arm, but slightly elevated, to give an upward curve, and thus again avoid a straight line.

If the speaker find it necessary to merge this gesture into that of the uplifted hand (over, but slightly to the right of the head), the hand must drop below the line of the horizontal arm. As the elbow bends and the forearm comes to the perpendicular, the hand points straight upward. The forearm, in continuance of this development, goes backward to the shoulder, and as it comes to rest, the hand, now bending back on the wrist, continues the circular form of the gesture, until it lies restfully, and the evolution is complete.

The most difficult achievement in connection with this branch of the subject is to present the attitude of doing nothing well. A false movement or gesture is akin to a discord in music. However graceful in progress, it

becomes distractingly uncomfortable unless satisfactorily resolved. The discord in music must melt into a concord, however long delayed. The gesture should result in a similar resolution—repose. If the body, arm, leg, head, or eye move during the interval of rest, repose is out of the question. The fidgeting of the speaker creates disturbance in the minds of the audience, and the effect of the most gracefully-conceived movement under such circumstances is lost. Perfect impassiveness for a brief interval must always follow action. Respect these periods of rest as one would observe those of punctuation. In these cases, the face should indicate no emotion whatever. Stand and appear as a statue in stone to which the sculptor has failed to impart even a semblance of thought. When you do move, do so with the firmness and animation of definite purpose. As you would give your voice time to travel, so allow the audience to realise the significance of your last gesture. By the same effective pauses, let quotations stand apart from your own spoken ideas.

The chief emphasis, or climax, of a movement or gesture should occur upon the most emphatic word of the phrase. Where action

accompanies words it should develop in accordance with a sense of rhythm. Both should move in harmonious flow. Rhythmic discrepancies will create angularities destructive of symmetry.

MOVEMENT

THE basis of body movement is balance. Before a child can walk it must stand. This is not an easy accomplishment for either the child on his feet or the adult novice on the stage. It comes to both through practice. Though I am not dealing with stagecraft, there is connected with movement much of interest to the reciter and speaker, therefore a brief outline of general principles may not be out of place.

We preserve the centre of gravity for our bodies by balancing on one foot or the other, or on both. It is sometimes material on which foot we obtain that balance, because it often governs the direction in which we are to face; and we are supposed, as a rule, to appear to face the person with whom we are conversing. When listening to an individual on our right (both half-turned to the audience), our balance should be on the left foot; in speaking to that person it would be on the right, or on that foot nearer to the individual addressed. If we were speaking to some one

on the left of the stage, from the right, our balance would be found on the left foot. In each of these cases, it would bring us, although standing sideways, "to the front," towards the audience, on whom we never turn our backs when speaking. The foot or leg on which a man obtains his balance I term the "engaged," the other, the "disengaged" foot.

In a general way, a man should always endeavour to mask the disengaged leg by means of that upon which he is balanced. Then he is unlikely to fall into the ungainly position described by two legs awkwardly apart.

In pacing backward and forward across the footlights, as a speaker may be inclined to do, he should remember to pause on the right foot when pacing to the right, and on the left when moving left. This will bring him with his face to the audience; otherwise he will find himself addressing the blank wall at the rear of the stage.

It is well to know how many steps he means to take on these occasions, also that three steps to the right necessitates commencing with the right foot; four, with the left.

Walking to the left, three steps, commence on the left; four steps, on the right.

As one takes just the number of steps to balance the rhythm of the spoken phrase, it disturbs the flow of the text if one has to put in an extra stride in order to face the audience.

To preserve easy balance and graceful carriage, there should be a slight swaying motion of the hips, not particularly noticeable to the casual observer, but sufficient for the student to feel and appreciate. The requisite amount will induce a pleasant consciousness of balance, and absolute control. This should also cause the draperies of women students to hang and move on artistic lines.

It is not always effective to walk in a bee-line towards an object near which your "business" calls you, particularly when the shortest course would mean a straight line parallel with the footlights. The movement should be effected in a curved direction, thus:



There are many reasons for so doing, but the following will suffice:

1. The bee-line, save in some exceptional case, is not a graceful course, because cramped and angular.
2. The curve assists the body to a poise presenting graceful outlines, particularly in

the case of a lady, when her train will not only better dispose itself, but gain artistic effect during the progress of the movement.

The pleasant little tricks causing draperies to curl around the form are often assisted by curved movements, inducing willowy carriage of the body. In these, the hip and head play important parts. When the form is describing a curve to the left, it should balance or rest on the right hip and foot, the left or disengaged foot be pointed outward to the left with the heel in and up, the toe out, conforming harmoniously with the general outline of the body. The head must also incline to the left and the upper portion of the body bend in the same direction. The contour of the female form will then describe this poise:



The side inclination of the head must not be so extreme as to become angular, otherwise symmetrical outline will not be attained. The approximate inclination may be realised by first fixing the gaze, whilst the head is erect, on some object or point straight before one. The elevation of the head may be corrected by looking at a point either higher or lower, as

necessary in the case of being photographed. Then let the student slowly and gradually look to the left, inclining the head more and more as the eye moves, until the desired curve is reached. When this is accomplished, note the object exactly in range of comfortable vision. Return to the erect head, original point, and repeat the operation to test the accuracy of the gauge, and the poise may be then faithfully and promptly accomplished each time. If the distance from observation point to point is calculated and remembered, the same movement can be executed on any other part of the stage at which the student may find herself. Carrying the gaze from object to object assists graceful inclination of the head and body in curved movements. If a gesture is demanded, follow the progress of the moving hand with the eye, allowing the head to incline as the hand moves. For example: Suppose you are looking toward the right column of a proscenium, with your body turned in that direction, and you want to gesticulate towards some one on the opposite side of the stage, you would describe with your hand and arm this movement:



It would be effected thus: Change balance from right to left foot as the hand starts; incline the body to the left and follow the moving hand with the eye. Both will then travel from a point half-way up the right wall of the auditorium, across the room in the above curved line, and rest at a point left high over the corner of the gallery. Hand, body, and eye should all move in sympathy. Movement under these conditions resolves itself into an easy mechanical action infallible in its application.

Executing right-about-face from the above starting point, in order to confront the character on the opposite side of the stage, the hand and gaze would travel by the reverse course, thus:



It should be remembered that when a speaker is supposed to look another straight in the face, he frequently must not do so for the reason that the first named would appear to be turning his back upon the audience, particularly if the positions were thus:

X

X

In such cases, the speaker should direct his gaze across the stage at some point in front of the other person (more towards the audience). If the speaker incline his body slightly towards his colleague, in a listening attitude, it will often be sufficient; the eyes may then rest almost anywhere, because the attitude of his figure will indicate the direction in which the remark is addressed. For the reason that an actor has to bring himself towards the audience, it happens that one character may seldom actually look another in the face.

For the same consideration, an actor making an exit should hardly ever walk in a straight line to the handle of a door in the side flats. He should take the movement by a curve, which brings him face to the audience.



Example: He should make for the hinge-jamb of the door, and before reaching it move in a curve up to the door-knob just far enough to allow him to stretch forth his hand to the knob with a free arm movement.

Seldom approach a chair, for the purpose of

being seated, in a straight line. Proceed by a curve:



Example: Place the finger-tips of the right hand on the nearest corner of the back of the chair; walk the curve sufficiently far from the chair as will permit of the finger-tips resting on the back. Drop the hand when you have walked out of reach; continue the curve till your last right foot brings you in front of the chair. Keep your balance for a moment on the right foot; draw your left quietly back to the left side of the chair. Change your balance to the left foot. Then seat yourself by insinuating your frame into the chair with a gentle side-movement of body, and then subside, with right foot still extended in the original position; or, just draw that foot backward (keeping a straight leg) as the body comes to rest.

In whichever direction you approach a chair, if possible, do so by a curve.

Let almost every movement describe more or less a portion of a circle or loop, or a suggestion of one.

Avoid angular lines! Remember, nature steers clear of them.

CONTRACTION OF VOCAL MUSCLES

VOCAL sounds necessitate certain contraction of the muscles of the throat. This, however, is very slight, and does not amount to the tense expression which results in throaty quality. It is not incompatible with a perfectly free throat. The process is involuntary. Every one employs it, unconsciously, in most ordinary speech. When firm, staccato attack is desired this contraction is slightly increased, that is all. If the full breath be held in check and the note vehemently, but crisply struck, the operation is completed without thought of the method by which it is attained. This I term the "check-breath" attack, because the breath is held severely in check before sounding the note. If the tone is to be sustained after the clean attack, the flow of breath must be held in check in order that the power of the voice may remain uniform. By this form of attack we acquire a well-rounded resonant tone with the least expenditure of breath. The note at once derives carrying power, and if the voice is to be sustained the

pulsations are easily continued with an economical flow of wind—if the current be firmly under control. The main contraction of this attack takes place in the chest. In the throat, it is slight and momentary.

The above is not applicable, however, to every mood. The voice must often be increased gently and insinuatingly. Then the note should be struck softly, almost imperceptibly, by a loose, soft breath, which gains force the longer it is maintained, but with little contraction of the throat. This I term “swift crescendo attack.” A single note may be made to pulsate in this way without acquiring the metallic hardness of the check-breath voice.

LARGE TONGUES

ABNORMALLY large, or ill-placed tongues obstruct the voice, because they lessen the depth of the sound-cavity—the mouth—by unduly elevating the tongue in the middle.

To make the latter lie flat and assume a concave shape is the desideratum. This may be practised by pronouncing the word “thou.” Look into the mirror and one may observe the position of the tongue this word gives.

Another plan is to touch the lower teeth with the tip of the tongue, with mouth open, and then draw a full breath. Having touched the teeth thus, the tongue should be drawn backward, very slightly, and all thought of the unruly member abandoned.

The mind should never dwell upon the tongue or throat, otherwise this consciousness will result in unnatural influences upon tone from either.

BAD VOICES

SOME vocal organs are better than others, of course; but there are few so deficient as to be incapable of acquiring agreeable tone. On the other hand, many excellent voices sound disagreeable because they are so abominably distorted by unnatural methods of production. There is a cure for nearly every vocal ailment—of that I am convinced. Many students (of singing, elocution, stage deportment, etc.) have come under my notice with faults innumerable, yet these shortcomings have been duly eradicated on the lines suggested in these pages. If a teacher be of sufficiently analytical mind he will detect the cause. Having discovered this, he may soon find the remedy. No person, however, can do this unless he understands the construction of vocal machinery.

Illustrative of the importance of pitch I may mention the case of a graceful young actress who had hitherto played bright, juvenile parts with success. The time came when she must essay that of a mature, sentimental

character. Her voice had not been attuned to the requisite mood. It was too high, bright, and, I must admit, hard, for the sad, mellow lines. The voice had to be rebuilt. This was successfully effected on these lines: A lower pitch, sustained tones, with soft, fluty upward inflections, contrasting with deeper modulations of the more passionate strength. The lower intervals prevailing imparted the requisite reminiscent shade of sadness; whilst occasional upward inflections not only gave the softer lights, but presented a singularly musical flexibility and symmetrical range. Thus a change of pitch was able to completely transform a hard, high monotonous voice into a responsive organ.

Some such expedient is applicable to the piping voice of the speaker destitute of grateful modulations.

Alternations of inflection preclude that regular repetition of intervals which creates monotonous delivery. Every modulation of voice should convey contrasting characteristics indicative of the emotional state of the mind by which the speaker is swayed. Without such influences the best of voices will become flat and colourless. By the aid of

appropriate modulations, an indifferent organ may acquire resonance and the flow of musical progression.

The shape of the mouth-opening governs the vocal mood. Round, condensed lips create round, compact tone. A large shapeless opening produces scattered tone. A long narrow aperture emits thin, but often brilliant tone, and conveys a smiling impression. Depressed mouth corners, in oval or round shapes, induce pathetic utterance. Closed teeth lead to reedy, nasal qualities. Various breath-pressures influence the mood of reflective mouth-positions. Pitch, likewise, affects emotional character. Wrong pronunciation may destroy the effects of appropriate facial and breath influences. It will thus be realised that upon the efficiency of the technique depends the quality of the voice. Employment of excessive wind results in harsh, breathy qualities; irregular flow, sensations destructive of the rounded, compact note. We often encounter "sandy," "grating," or "fuzzy" tone. Sustained volume, at even power, and the compactness of a fixed mouth on the vowel sound, induce superior tone and the impression of ease and security. Clear enunciation heightens the attack and quality of

vowels, facilitates tone movement, and induces, instinctively, correct flow of breath. Attention to these details will improve the quality of the worst of voices.

REMINDERS

ANALYSE all sentences in order to distinguish the relative importance of essential as compared with expletive words.

The former demand emphasis or inflection. Their meaning cannot be conveyed without employment of the precise technique indicative of their sense.

One word may convey many meanings. Seek to grasp the author's version of it.

Expletive words require no emphasis. They are treated parenthetically.

The voice, whether chest or falsetto, is purified by sustaining it at precisely the same strength (whether in loud or soft passages) on the vowel sounds. To thus sustain, equal flow of breath and muscular tension of the chest and muscles of the throat must be preserved. The longer tone is held, the swifter should be the flow of breath to compensate for that waste of power which comes from gradually diminishing wind in the lungs.

To acquire a buoyant voice it is necessary to quicken the flow of breath. A speaker

cannot sustain his tones in such a way as to suggest buoyancy without frequently employing what is known in music as a crescendo. If the tone falter by uneven pressure of the breath, it gives the impression of an un-resourceful organ. Supported by slightly increasing wind-flow the voice appears to be endowed with fulness and pliability, which suggest easy, spontaneous delivery and unlimited vocal resource. This I term buoyancy. It illustrates the distinction between facile expression and crude vocal movement. Tones unsupported by this method are liable to "sag" or droop, and the utterance becomes tame and dispiriting.

Accelerated breath does not necessarily involve rapid utterance. It does, however, enhance the purity and vitality of tone quality.

Avoid the habit of "swallowing" the end of a word or sentence. This often occurs when the voice falls on a diminishing breath.

Remember, that the voice demands stronger breath-pressure on a low than on a high key.

The reposeful nature of deep tone is apt to lull the novice into indifference respecting breath support.

Where a soft voice is demanded the flow of breath must be perfectly even, whatever the power employed.

Fluctuations in the continuity of breath currents disturb the carrying force of the voice.

Don't forget that loud tones travel quicker than the softer ones, and that the sudden, excessive vibrations of the former are apt to overtake and swamp the latter.

Give words time to travel.

In delivering a phrase or sentence do not increase the power of the voice abruptly, especially if that increase has not been immediately preceded by a pause.

A crescendo emphasis is generally preferable to an explosive or percussion attack.

The breath-pressure upon such consonants as "l," "m," and "n," often needs to be stronger than on open vowels.

Such pressure must be regulated by the particular emotional quality the text demands.

In dialogue, when taking up a cue from the last speaker, avoid the pitch just employed by that character, otherwise a monotony will ensue which renders it difficult for an audience

to distinguish the speaker and intelligently follow the lines.

As to order of study:

1. Commence by acquiring ease of throat, tongue, and jaw. Let this be continued until you feel no parts.

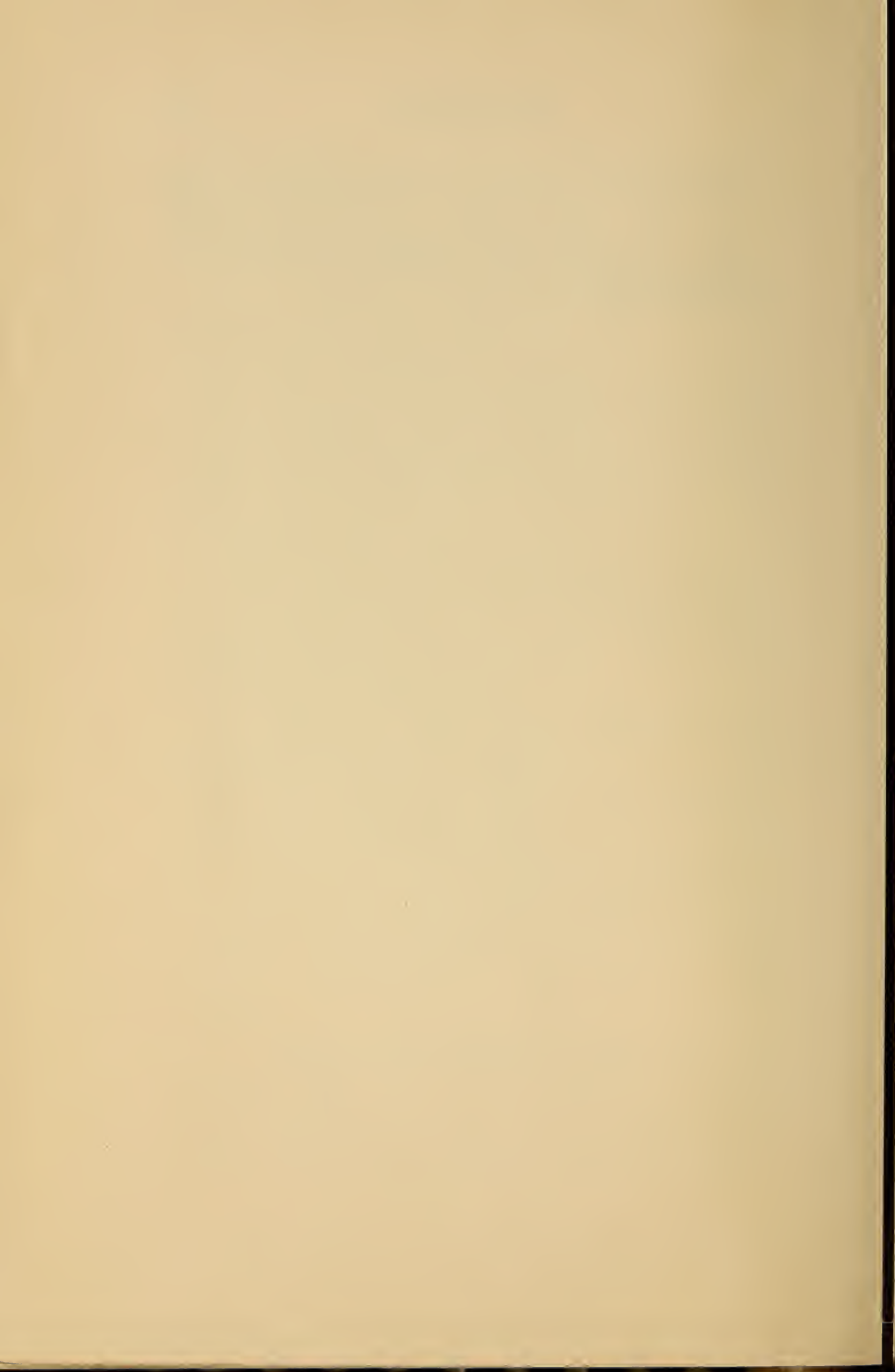
2. Then it will be found easy to deal with the management of the breath. The false, upper control being removed, the true control at the base of the lungs becomes first necessary, then easy.

3. Proceed to pronunciation of the vowels and enunciation of the consonants, taking particular care to avoid the errors un-learned under 1 and 2.

4. Emphasis and inflection may then be attempted along with gesture, etc. It will help the student to regard words as possessing an inherent vitality and as if they were pictures of the ideas they represent. By long connection, idea and word are associated, and clearness of words is of the greatest assistance to the mind of the hearer.

5. The last and final direction, more important than any, is: Having first become mechanically perfect in every detail, then forget all we have learned, concentrate upon

our subject and our audience, and, above all, forget the speaker. This is true elocution; but those cannot forget who have never remembered.







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